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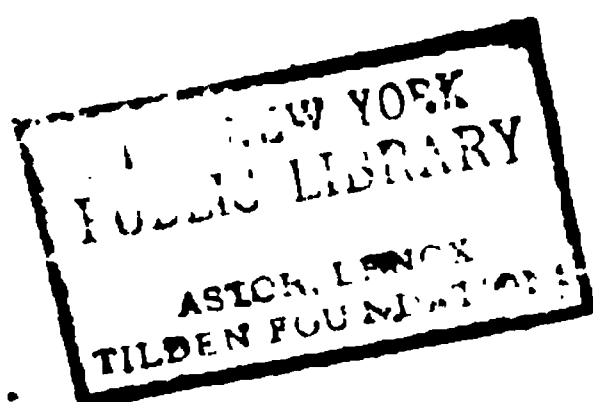
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EXCURSIONS
IN THE
INTERIOR OF RUSSIA:
INCLUDING
SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND POLICY
OF THE
EMPEROR NICHOLAS;
SCENES IN ST. PETERSBURG,
&c. &c.

By ROBERT BREMNER, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.

THESE volumes chiefly consist of the narrative of a short visit to Russia, during the autumn of 1836, in the course of a general tour through Europe.

Much of what they contain, however, is the fruit of the author's occasional intercourse with Russians in other parts of the continent. Having (on two different occasions) spent in all upwards of five years abroad, he has had it in his power to become acquainted with the manners and sentiments of Russians, under circumstances which enabled them to throw off the mask which, in their own country, few of them can dare to dispense with. To all who know what Russia really is, it is unnecessary to say that it is not *in Russia* that the true state of opinion among the higher classes of that country can be best learned.

To his long residence abroad, during which he paid considerable attention to the various political questions connected with Russia, the author is also indebted for many of the facts given in support of the remarks which he hazards on the policy and character of the present emperor.

Fully aware, however, that neither his visit to Russia, nor his opportunities of becoming acquainted with the opinions of Russians in other countries, can qualify him for doing justice to such an ample theme as that comprised in the present work, he begs of those who may cast their eye on the following pages, that they will regard their contents rather as scraps by the way, than as the complete and well-matured production of the study. In fact the title—"Excursions" and "Sketches"—will at once warn the reader that he is here to find only snatches caught by the passing eye, not the full landscape itself—the mere gleanings of a vast and fertile field, not the rich harvest which abler hands would have reaped.

It is also necessary to state that the work was begun on a foreign shore, under circumstances which rendered it impossible to obtain access to books of any value, and has been completed in a beautiful but remote part of Scotland, where it was equally impossible to obtain the aid of any extensive library. It has been entirely written, therefore, from hurried notes kept while travelling, and does not even contain that array of learned names which might have atoned for the want of learning in the author himself.

In fact, conscious as he is of its many defects, he would not have presumed to lay his work before the public, had he not felt that at a moment like the present, when the most overwhelming interest exists in

regard to Russia, it is the duty of every one, who has made that country his study, and endeavoured to obtain correct information concerning it, to give to the world whatever may be calculated to throw light on its actual condition, its prospects, or its resources. This duty is doubly incumbent on those who are anxious, as the author is, to counteract the tendency of some works which have recently appeared on the same subject. The presses of the continent now teem with publications containing the most fulsome praises of Russia, and giving the most overcharged statements of her power and resources ; and, unfortunately, the presses of England are not altogether ignorant of books written in the same spirit. Were we to take these for our guides, the government of Russia would appear to be the most liberal of all governments, and the people of Russia the happiest of all people. Her strength is held up to us as boundless, irresistible,—as the most formidable, and best consolidated, that ever threatened the liberties and the rights of man. In short, the praises of Russia, which now ring on every side, are of the most exaggerated description.

It would not, perhaps, be difficult to discover the source from which many of these representations proceed ; or, at least, to account for the tone which they assume. Suffice it, however, to say, that truth will never be written on Russia, except by those who repair to it untrammelled by connexion with the government, and who leave it unbought by the favours of the emperor.

That the author was in this impartial position, will at once be evident, when he states that he and the friend included in the “we” which is employed throughout the following pages visited Russia as private individuals, with no object in view but to make themselves acquainted with the manners, condition, and prospects of the people ; in short, to obtain as much information as could be acquired during so short a visit, about a country which is daily becoming more and more interesting to the other nations of Europe. They had neither government protection, nor a single tie of interest to bias their views. But though they had no higher patronage than that which good introductions procured for them, they enjoyed many opportunities for acquiring information, and can honestly say that they endeavoured to turn them to the best account, by associating with those who, from their talents and position, were best qualified to give them useful and accurate intelligence ; by mingling freely in the various scenes of interest with which both the capital and the interior abound ; by leaving no sight unvisited that was likely to yield instruction ; and by sparing no pains in their endeavour to arrive at the truth on all important subjects connected with the country or its prospects.

These excursions, therefore, should they possess no other value, may at least serve as specimens of what travellers, anxious to make the best use of their time, may see and learn during even a brief stay in a strange

land ; and the author has been encouraged in his undertaking, by the conviction which he entertains that many defects will be pardoned in a writer who is anxious to correct misrepresentation, to remove prejudice, to IMPART TRUTH ; and especially when he treats of subjects which, it will be universally allowed, are of vital moment to England at the present crisis.

So little has of late been written on the *interior* of Russia, that the author trusts the portions of his work which relate to it will possess considerable interest for all who may be anxious to become acquainted with the actual state of that vast region. The agriculture and manufactures of the principal districts—the condition of the serfs—and, especially, the internal resources of the empire, are subjects which at this moment possess the very highest interest for the statesman and the publicist ; and all of these, accordingly, have been touched upon at considerable length. Passing pictures of scenery and manners, and notices of such other subjects as are likely to interest the general reader, have also been introduced ; and they may be more acceptable to the public, from the fact that, while so much has recently been published on the manners and scenery of the more frequented portions of Europe, comparatively little of the same description has appeared on Russia. This is, doubtless, attributable to the circumstance that few of our travellers visit that country ; for, even in the present day, when the passion for travel has become so universal, and thousands of

miles are thought as little of as hundreds were some years ago, the number of Englishmen who venture to the south of Moscow seldom exceeds one or two every year.

This paucity of foreign visitors to Russia may be partly owing to the want of information regarding the method of travelling in that country. For, strange to say, while there are hundreds of guide-books to every other country, there is not a single work that gives any really available advice to the traveller intending to visit the dominions of the autocrat. In order to supply this want, and in answer to the many applications which friends have made to him for advice about travelling in Russia, the author here publishes all that his notes contain on this subject. Judging by the difficulty which he himself had in procuring information of this kind when about to visit Russia, he trusts that, while not devoid of interest to the general reader, the notices he has given on the best way of proceeding to St. Petersburg—the customs and police formalities on entering and leaving it; the more common words of the language; hotels and posting; and particularly on the best method of accomplishing a journey in the interior, will be *of the greatest use to those who intend to travel in Russia.* A full enumeration of all the topics of this nature, with references to the pages where they occur, is given under the head of HINTS TO TRAVELLERS, at the end of the Table of Contents to the present volume.

That some of the questions discussed in these pages are handled with a freedom which may be far from agreeable to the admirers of Russia, is what the author is fully prepared to hear. But he is persuaded that the enlightened sovereign who now sways the destinies of that mighty empire would rather hear the strictures of an impartial censor than the praises of an uncompromising eulogist. The commendations here bestowed on some of his measures will be less liable to suspicion, when they come from one who has felt himself constrained to speak in very different terms of other parts of his policy.

Throughout the narrative, the author has endeavoured to avoid thrusting himself unnecessarily forward on the reader's attention. His object has been *to give information about the people and the country*, not to write a brilliant romance, of which he himself should be the hero. Deeming all details of a merely personal nature to be nothing but impertinencies in a book of travels, he has seldom alluded to affairs which, however interesting to himself, can possess no interest for the public. Facts, in themselves trifling, are indeed occasionally mentioned, but it is only when they tend to throw light on the manners or customs of the country.

After what has been already mentioned, it is unnecessary to add that it is neither with a view to give additional importance to the statements, nor to ward off

responsibility for them, that the pompous “ we” has been made use of in these volumes. In fact, the original party of *two* was latterly increased to *four* individuals; but the author does not feel himself entitled to publish the names of those in whose society he performed his happy and improving rambles through Russia, as *he alone* is accountable for all the statements and opinions advanced in the work, which he now respectfully recommends to the indulgence of the public.

London. January 25, 1839.

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CHAPTER I.

SUMMER HOURS IN THE BALTIC.

Our sailing from Stockholm—Reasons for avoiding the route through Finland—The *Johanna Sophia*—Scanty berth on board—Sketch of a Swedish captain and his crew—Dropping down Channel—Contrast with the Thames—*Wexholm*—Romantic Scenery—*Sandham*—Gulf of Bothnia—Islands of Aland—Their importance to Russia—Sunrise—“Land”—*Dago Island*—*Revel*—*Sveaborg*.

“To morr’ punkt at tolf, jimmlemen, we schiff from Stockholm.”

Such were the mystic words in which captain, or more correctly, skipper Eric Simonsson of Malmo, acquainted us with the hour at which his tidy bark the *Johanna Sophia* was to sail for St. Petersburg; the good man wisely employing, as the safest means of communicating with foreigners, the amusing lingua-franca of the North—a capricious mixture of English, German, and Swedish, so accommodating that it varies with each speaker, according to the language in which he is, for the moment, most ambitious of being thought a proficient.

That he spoke a language, if language it could be called, out of which, with a little ingenuity, we could

always draw *some* meaning, was, of course, no slight recommendation of his ship. Besides his attainments in English, however, the captain possessed another great virtue in our eyes—he was overjoyed at the prospect of carrying us with him. Having never in all his voyages, to many parts of the world, had charge of even *one* Englishman, the thought of actually having *two* of them at once was so delightful to him, that we verily believe he would have taken us for nothing, rather than have renounced a distinction he had so long sighed for.

We had little difficulty therefore in coming to an agreement. Arrangements were soon made for our reception; and, knowing that we had to deal with a right peremptory and word-keeping Swede, we did not fail to be on board, the following day, most punctually at twelve.

But, alas! winds and waves provokingly kept true to their wonted fickleness. The captain was ready—we were ready—all the world was ready; yet noon was long past, and we moved not from the spot.

The bright sun of July shone so benignantly on the deep clear waters of the Mälar—the vapoury clouds hung so gracefully over the most beautiful of all the beautiful cities of the north—the lovely flowers crept so gently against the gleaming windows of the palace, beneath which lay our vessel—silence—the silence of noonday, more startling in a great city than that of night—rested so breathlessly on rock, and tower, and tree—in short, both on the water and on land all was

“ So peaceful and so fair,”

that the breeze refused to lift his discordant voice. A

goodly convoy was that day to leave the crowded harbour; but their canvas hung idly by the mast. The hundred ships around floated as if bound by a wintry spell; the sleeping sea-birds that basked in the tide were not more motionless.

Man himself was affected by the stillness and beauty of the summer day. The heavy wheels of commerce, as during the siesta in a southern clime, had ceased to roll. The sailor's shout, and the boatmaid's song, were hushed. The oars of the few boats still passing from side to side glided as noiselessly as if the element they dipped into had been turned into oil.

Wishing, however, to be ready for any change, we remained patiently on board, hoping that, as day declined, some stray gale might steal from the lakes of the interior, and waft us on to the sea. In fact, having regretfully said our adieux—and who ever left Stockholm and its warmhearted people without regret?—we were unwilling to land there again, lest, after all, we might be tempted to give up our project of visiting the dominions of the Tzar.

We knew before embarking that the voyage to St. Petersburg would occupy at least eight days, and perhaps as many as eighteen. But, even with the chance of delay, we thought it advisable to avoid the more circuitous course now usually adopted—by the steamboat to Abo, and thence by land along the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland. We had no desire to face the annoyances complained of by all who enter Russia at that point. There being no public conveyance from the landing-port, we should have been compelled to take any

carriage and any servant that happened to be idle, at the risk of being robbed by the one, or having our necks broke by the other.

The greatest objection to this route, however, lies in the severities of the Russian custom-house, which, troublesome everywhere, are on the Finland line so particularly annoying, that some friends who traversed it the preceding year say they would go five hundred miles about rather than be again exposed to them. Carriage, trunks, pocket-books, and pockets are searched, not once merely on landing, but over and over again at certain stations along the road. One had his box of tooth-powder carefully emptied to see what treason or what contraband might lurk in its dusky shelter. Another had his soap-balls cut in two, with the same purpose; he next saw his stockings slowly unfolded, pair after pair, and was not sure that some of them did not vanish in the process; for the searchers have a trick of coming three or four together, and, distracting their victim's attention by opening several packages at the same time, quietly secrete any article that pleases them; yet, after all, ask a fee for having given so little trouble.

It should be a rule with the traveller in every country not to allow more than *one* of his trunks to be open at the same moment in such places. But, with the light-fingered Russians, even this precaution will not always save his property. An American gentleman, lately passing this very road, with his wife, while he had his feet on one portmanteau, and was sitting on the other to keep them from being all opened at once, had the satisfaction of seeing a costly shawl walk off before his eyes.

The best of it was, the theft was denied ; the search which he attempted in the adjoining cottage among the goods and chattels of the officer's wife, to whom he supposed it had been handed, was, of course, fruitless. For the sake of future travellers, he afterwards complained to the finance minister, who received him very courteously, and, perhaps, ordered one or two of the parties to be knouted,—then appointed others in their place, to play the same game on the very first opportunity. These are evils in Russia which, although civilization may banish them, neither the knout nor the emperor have yet been able to root out.

In short, the complaints about this Abo route are so great, that, though the country is very pretty, and the roads good, there are few who know its character that would not prefer almost any conveyance by sea all the way to St. Petersburg.

We, at least, had no reason to regret our choice ; an admission at which some may marvel when we state that the accommodations of the *Johanna Sophia* were not of the most elegant description. The cabin—a sort of overgrown sentry-box fastened to the deck—was something like the poet's closet—

—— “ just six feet by four ;
So nobly large, 'twas scarcely able
To admit a single chair and table.”

A temporary bed-frame occupied the doorway on one side, while another displayed a brown box, serving as a second bed by night and as a bench by day.

Sailors, however, are such good hands at making the most of little space, that this cage further contained a

folding-board to write and dine upon, a cabinet for our books and maps, and a larder for indispensables. In fine, nothing was wanting, however, to any one in good health and willing to be pleased.

The crew, as we found on further acquaintance, was very steady ; and our squat friend, the captain, one of the worthiest souls that ever chewed tobacco. In his trips to London and Leith he had picked up about as much of English as he had acquired of German in his visits to Stettin, and from both united had concocted a most amusing jargon peculiar to himself.

Having a high regard for England, and everything connected with it, he showed us great attention from the first ; and, when we got better acquainted, his anxiety to make us comfortable was most affectionate. Travelling he held in the greatest horror. On hearing that we had been full twelve months from home, and might still be absent as many more, he held up his hands in wonder, and fairly confessed that he could not imagine what tempted people to go among strangers, merely to be pestered with difficulties. In a ship, to be sure, a person might visit foreign countries without losing all claim to be regarded as a man of sense ; *there* the wanderer was in a manner at home all the time ; but on land ! he would make ten trips through the Bay of Biscay sooner than trust himself ten hours on shore. His tirades were generally wound up with an emphatic “ They ’re terrible fellows, thim furranners ! ”

These warnings, partly intended for the benefit of a Swedish mechanic on board, going to seek his fortune in Russia, were given out of pure love. He seemed to

look upon us somewhat in the light of children that had run away from home, without calculating the danger of an unfriendly world. If at any time we appeared to tire of a ship-life, or if the vapours threatened us, which was but seldom, or if the Russian grammar, which we were trying to study, was thrown aside in utter despair, there was no end to the devices he employed to cheer us. When his lessons in steering, boxing the compass, studying the charts, heaving the lead, fishing for turbot, or other grave pursuits, were all exhausted, he would put on his best gray coat, and sit down with us to ask questions about England, or spin a sailor's yarn, squirting out waves of tobacco-juice at every second sentence. Should all these intellectual methods fail, he tried to rouse us with a beaker of his best coffee, or some savoury dish, cooked under his own eye. Indeed, the "cok" being by no means a first-rate professor, and, as he said, there being "no wummans on board to do things nice," he generally bore a hand himself in preparing our dinner, and brought it to table, with the joyous shout, "Dinner's a-cumming, jimmlemen!"

We always knew by his dress when a squall was approaching. The moment the first angry cloud appeared he mounted himself in a pair of enormous boots, which covered half his body, wrapped an ominous red comforter about his neck, donned a battered scraper, with a tail down the back as long as the swab, and took with double fury to the tobacco-pouch. He never lost his temper, however; the only theme that could at all ruffle it was that of steam-boats—a sore topic with most of his profession. His remarks on this subject were a

beautiful specimen of the sort of reasoning brought against innovations of every kind. "Both stim-boats and railroads is werry dangerous," would he say in better English than usual. "I'm for nun on 'em myself. Only ten men employed where there were a hundred, and horrid nasty. Near a dozen of ships used to go several times every summer to Lubeck; now *one* stim-boat carries all the goods. *They* took six weeks, and *she* only ten days, out and home. It's quite a shame. My hands get fourteen dollars (1*l.* 4*s.*) a month, and the stim-fellows don't give no more. They should all be burnt. I hope nun o' my men will ever try such nigger work."

In fact the good Swede had a great regard for his crew; and it is much to the credit of their country that neither from them nor him did we hear an oath or an angry word all the time we were on board.

The regularity with which they performed their devotions was most exemplary; and the same sight may be witnessed on board of most Swedish ships. At a certain hour, before setting the night-watch they assembled together in a small place on deck. When each had uncovered a prayer was said by the captain, and then all united in singing a psalm; after which they separated, each going to his post, with mutual blessings. Those quiet sunset-hours in the Baltic, hallowed by such a touching scene, will long be looked back to among the most pleasing remembrances of wanderings in which we have to thank God for much that is pleasing. Generally the first sound that greeted us again in the morning was the voice of prayer renewed. The

manner too in which they honoured the sabbath—so often unheeded at sea—was most edifying; there was something pious even in their way of changing the watch in the night, the man at the helm chanting slowly, “ Rise up to change the watch, in the name of God!” and if the crew happened to be asleep when the supper-hour came on, the summons always ran, “ Turn out to eat, in the name of God.”

In such good company did we leave Stockholm; the weather continuing so calm that it took us nearly two days to reach the sea, a distance of only seventy miles. Whatever breeze there was above, the high rocks which line the long channel the whole way from the sea to the Swedish capital lulled its influence so completely, that, in spite of every effort, we lay the whole of the first day within hearing of the city murmur. While the boat was sent ahead with a few hands on the oars, for the lazy purpose of tugging us on at the rate of some yards in two or three hours, we had no solace but to look with envy on the happy people driving about in the park, or to hang over the ship's side as submissively as the unsuccessful sportsmen who had rowed from town to pass the afternoon in fishing for *stræmlings*, a small (and the only) kind of herring now found in the Baltic; in angling for which no bait is used, but merely a sharp hook, against which the fish is thrown by chance and is caught—to the great joy of the cockney angler, who sits as if boat and man were nailed together, jerking his elbows and nodding his head with the monotonous patience of a Chinese figure in a tea-shop.

Yet it was a pleasant dreamy life, as we lay gazing on

the smooth waters, and the fantastic wooded heights mirrored back with new beauty from the crystal below. The varying city, of itself, long formed a magnificent picture, and its charm was heightened by the nearer objects—the graceful ships, when the evening breeze at last came forth, with their sails all set, moving lazily up and down, and across—pleasure-boats—scenes of industry, with the busy hammer echoing back from the cliffs—and the falling calm of sunset beginning to rest upon all.

About 16 miles down we passed *Wexholm*, a kind of dilapidated fortress, on a small rock in the middle of the channel, where ships going and coming show their papers, and passengers their passports. On the north side, where the rocks recede a little, is a small town, with abundance of windmills and distilleries. The channels on either side of the rock are so narrow that a boom can be thrown across each. The place is of little strength, but is now undergoing repair. The handful of convicts at work were probably the only cause of newspaper rumours which had recently been travelling through Europe, announcing mighty preparations in the forts and strong places of Sweden.

Just below this point the direct navigation is impeded by the remains of two men-of-war, which were sunk in 22 feet of water, so far back as 1801, to keep the English from passing.

It is now long since any English ships of war passed here; but, to all appearance, the day is not far distant when we may find it wise to send them this way, unless we wish to see a steady ally become the victim of an in-

satiable ambition. Russia, with her usual foresight and cunning, under the mask of friendship and the interchange of courtesies, beneath which she so well knows how to conceal the most inimical designs, is making herself well acquainted with the approach to Stockholm. A Russian brig of war was lying in the very heart of the city during our stay there ; and on our way down we met one of the emperor's steamers hastening up with young officers on board, sent thither with the view of making them practically acquainted with the highway which they hope soon to traverse in a different character.

Soon after passing the little fortress the river becomes extremely beautiful, the widening channel being varied with verdant inlets and fine bays, at the bottom of one of which, to the south, rises the palace of Fredericksberg—a large structure among gentle eminences fringed with trees. In truth, few rivers are more romantic than the noble approach to the Swedish capital. At certain spots the channel is so narrow that we could touch the foliage drooping from the rocks overhead. From the loftiness and variety of its shores, this channel is, in point of scenery, far superior to the sail from Margate to London. But what a contrast its silence and loneliness present to the shouts and bustle of the Thames ! After we had got away from the pleasure-boats of the citizens, which with even a moderate breeze could have been done in twenty minutes, the inlet was often as silent as the lakes of Norway. Ships of some kind or other, however, were generally in sight ; now and then a girl would row up, in a little boat, with her milk-pails glittering about her, bound, quite alone, on a twenty-mile voyage to market ; or a

barge would appear, sunk to the edge by the towering castles of firewood built on its deck. Sometimes a fishing-boat would offer us her capture, or a provision-lugger would creep up from Finland, which still supplies the Swedish capital with butter, cheese, poultry, salmon, beef,—in short, as the captain said, that fertile land exports “all kinds of *fat* things.”

These objects, however, presented themselves only at distant intervals. At times not a single sail was in view; and we were often so completely becalmed, that we had an opportunity of rowing in the yawl to spots so tranquil and so beautiful, that, while we gazed on them in the silence of the summer night, it seemed as if Ariosto's magic,

“*Giace in Arabia*”—

might, with more than poetic justice, have been transferred to these hyperborean solitudes. At other times, in exploring some of the lonely islands, our fancies changed to scenes of another character; for so lonely and beautiful are these wood-crowned isles, so fresh and limpid their surrounding waters, that we dreamed ourselves away to the far Pacific, and began to fancy that the fir-trees were palms, and thought we should meet poor Friday, or, at least, discover the print of a man's foot in the sand—but in vain. These islands, as well as the greater part of the land on either side of the inlet, are almost entirely tenantless and uncultivated; so that the capital, with this long stretch of fruitless soil on one side of it, is forced to draw most of its supplies from a distance: without Scania and Finland it could not stand out a fortnight..

Pleasant as we had found this inlet, the navigation requires such caution that we had a pilot on board all the way to *Sandham*, a small cluster of houses in the bay, which forms the entrance to the channel. It is surrounded by firs, which find but a scanty subsistence among the sand, and can scarcely be said to shelter the sad graves of those who had died of cholera in the quarantine. Here we got a new pilot to convey us out to sea, were overhauled by the custom-house, and left Sweden with a hearty breeze, which carried us gallantly past the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia.

On the map the gulf looks very narrow; in fact, a short way farther north it is so contracted, that in March, 1809, a Russian army, under Barclay de Tolly, crossed on the ice in three days from Wasa to Umea in Sweden. But, narrow as the mouth seems, it is beset by so many rugged provoking little islands, that vessels going to Abo often have a most tedious passage. Some English gentlemen, who hired a vessel for this voyage in the preceding October, were twelve days at sea, and in such danger, that they advise all who come after them to seek another course. In winter the post and couriers cross from island to island on the ice; but even those who are most accustomed to this task reckon it very dangerous work. The ice being often full of flaws, and large holes occurring where least expected, they never travel without a light boat and a band of fishermen, who, on reaching solid ice, mount their pinnace on long skates, and drag it to the next opening. At one point the coasts of Sweden and Russia are scarcely sixty miles

apart; and, there being islands between, there is not in fact, more than twenty-five miles of water.

The group of islands nearest the mouth of the gulf are known by the general name of the Aland isles. As many as eighty are said to be more or less inhabited by people who chiefly subsist by catching fish and sea-birds. The largest island, from which the whole group is named, contains 14,000 inhabitants. Near it, in 1714, Peter the Great gained over the Swedes the victory which first made Russia known as a naval power. Since 1809 these islands have belonged to Russia, who finds them of great importance as a station for some of her ships in winter; the current from the gulf being so stormy as to keep a few of the creeks free from ice, when the other Russian seas are completely frozen.

But it is time to take leave of the Baltic. Before doing so, however, we must mention a scene which will not soon be forgotten.

A sunrise at sea is one of the most impressive sights in nature. The hour of one had not long struck. As if expectant of some great advent, the waves had softened their turbulence, and the wind was almost lulled. In the east the sky was gradually reddening; but behind us lay a gray uniform mass of vapours, whose gloom only heightened the golden blushes that were every moment spreading wider and wider in the opposite quarter of the heavens. Ere long, the burning edge—a single narrow line you would have said—just kissed the waters. Little by little it rose,—and we gazed almost breathless on the expanding glow,—till the broad

round orb hung over the rejoicing waters, one strong undimmed circle of intensest red.

For a moment he paused, as if to survey the course he was to follow, then rolled on in triumph, to give beauty and strength to the nations.

Silence, deep and reverential, was the fittest hymn with which we could welcome the beneficent luminary ; words at such a moment would have been out of place. The complete tranquillity, in the absence of all other objects to distract the attention, increased the effect of a sight which, under any circumstances, would have been most sublime. To this at least it is that we attribute the deep impression made by this sunrise. We have witnessed others, but none with feelings of delighted awe equal to those now experienced. Except the smooth steady rush of the vessel through the water, not a single sound was to be heard ; while the only thing in sight was a solitary ship, in itself always a beautiful object, and now heightening rather than diminishing the effect of the orb which had brought it into light on the distant horizon.

The *last* sunrise that we had witnessed was on the Harz Mountains ; the next that we were to enjoy was on the Adriatic, within sight of Venice ; both were beautiful ; but neither of them made so strong an impression as this scene in the Baltic. In the one instance, the witches of the Brocken, in the guise of fair-haired German maidens, distracted our thoughts by their incantations ; in the other, the trampling feet of the wonted motley crowd of an Italian steamer banished all idea of solitude—for it was a December morning, and, even on

the Adriatic, December calls for exercise to keep the blood in motion. At the same time a serious rival to the struggling sun was presented by the smoke and flames in which the poor Fenice was bidding a last farewell to "the sea Cybele" it had so long helped to adorn.

True, we might contrast this northern sunrise with another—one beheld from the island of Capri, on the roof of Tiberius's palace—that giddy eminence where none can have stood at such a moment without trembling, not from fear, but from drunken joy; for lo! the sun is up, and, far as the eye can reach, a thousand and a thousand glories are gleaming beneath the bright sky of the Campanian spring—

—"Not a grove,
Citron, or pine, or cedar, not a grot,
Sea-worn and mantled with the gadding vine,
But breathes enchantment. Not a cliff but flings
On the clear wave some image of delight,
Some cabin-roof glowing with crimson flowers,
Some ruin'd temple or fallen monument."

What a contrast to the unsung, uninteresting shores along which we were now sailing!

The captain's shout of "Land! Russia!" soon after the sun had risen, most effectually dispelled all dreams of other lands. The first view of Russia resembled anything but the coast to which our thoughts were wandering.

The second morning from Sandham had brought us in sight of the large and populous island of *Dago*, which looks the most perfect contrast to all that is beautiful.

We next crossed the mouth of the deep gulf which takes its name from RIGA, the capital of Livonia, and the second trading city of Russia. White sails raised on poles to warn ships off the reefs which they mark, and the many lighthouses, as on the island of *Norgen* and others, show that the navigation is very dangerous. It was not till next day that we got a sight of REVEL, the capital of Esthonia, with its pointed towers high and heavy in the distance. We were now in sight also of the opposite coast of Finland, formed of low heights, presenting a singular variance with the cliff-bound shores of Sweden and Norway. When night fell we had often as many as three lighthouses within view at the same time.

The breeze which had been deserting us now returned, and, carrying us on all night at the rate of seven knots an hour, took us, next morning, swiftly past the high island of *Hogland*, with several other islands right and left. HELSINGFORS, the capital of Finland, and its neighbouring fortress SVEABORG, "the Gibraltar of the North," rose, but scarcely visible, on our left.

We now pass to a more exciting scene.

CHAPTER II.

CRUISE THROUGH THE RUSSIAN FLEET—THE EMPEROR AT SEA.

Surprise—First impression on meeting so many ships of war—Great strength of the Russian marine—The emperor on board—Anecdotes—The sea-sick courtier—Energy of the emperor—His general character—Beloved by the people—His anxiety to astonish them—Activity on land.—Exposes himself at sea.

IF disappointed of a sight of the sea-fortress of Finland, we were destined to behold another and more stirring exhibition of Russia's strength.

It was about noon (18th of July), when our attention was drawn to a large vessel bearing down with all sail set. She proved to be a ship-of-the-line, of the largest dimensions. Another soon appeared—another—and another—

“The cry was still ‘They come!’”—

till we could reckon near fifty men-of-war, all in view at the same moment.

A more splendid scene it had never been our fortune to witness. Such a number even of small vessels would have formed a beautiful sight; but the effect produced by this vast array of large ships is beyond description.

When the first feelings of wonder had subsided we rubbed our eyes, and began to ask where we could have got to? We were IN THE MIDST OF THE BALTIC FLEET;

and, if the truth must be told, we did not, as Englishmen, feel at all gratified by the sight. We had *heard* much of the increasing strength of the Russian navy, but merely hearing of it produced a very feeble impression compared with that of actually *seeing* this modern armada in life and motion around us.

The fleet was now out on its annual cruise, and we had come just at the luckiest moment, the ships being all in their highest trim, in expectation of the emperor. We gazed almost with childish wonder, long after we had thought that all must have passed, as frigate after frigate still continued to heave in sight.

The only way we had of measuring the space occupied by the different divisions was, by referring to the pins in our log-board, by which it appeared that, from noon, when we came upon the first of them, till past six in the evening, when we were still meeting ships, we had been going regularly five-and-a-half knots an hour; so that the whole line must have extended considerably above thirty miles. Nor was this all; a great many passed us in the night — at one time fourteen of them together; they were repeatedly so thick, ships of all sizes, that our captain could scarcely make his way through them.

In short, we thought the gay pageant would stretch till our very hearts should break for vexation.

It is not, however, as *alarmists* that we write, but simply to *give information* — to communicate what we saw and heard of the Russian fleet, with the view of helping, as far as we can, along with more able authorities, to enlighten the public regarding the real condition of the emperor's navy. For this purpose, some

facts connected with this fleet, and the state of the Russian marine in general, will be given in another part of the volume, under a distinct head. At present, it may suffice to state that for a time our attention was completely absorbed by the exciting spectacle. Such a splendid sight we never expect to see again. The day was most beautiful; every ship had her sails set, and ploughed the waters with the grace of some stately bird that scarcely ruffles her native lake. The fine breeze kept all in motion. Signals for changing position were rapidly passing from one end of the line to the other; new groups, the most varied and most beautiful, were thus every moment presenting themselves.

A little more of storm — something of danger — black hurrying gloom in place of that sunny sky — and it would have been a scene for a Vernet. Night at last closed upon it, and drove us to rest — to rest, but not to sleep. For the breeze had freshened, and the whole night long, there was nothing but shout and tumult, from the danger of being run foul of by some of the still increasing concourse.

At last, the emperor himself passed us in a fine steamer. He was on his way down to superintend the manœuvres which were to take place before a great proportion of the fleet should return to port for the season. The morning was rough, and, for a landsman, sufficiently disagreeable.

Many on board with his majesty were dreadfully ill. Among the anecdotes afterwards whispered about, was one of some member of the imperial party — a minister or other high functionary — on whom the sea-sickness

had such an extraordinary effect, that for a time he was literally mad ! In madness, as in another state of forgetfulness, truth will sometimes come out. Amid his ravings he upbraided his imperial master in the most unmeasured terms — heaped all kinds of abuse upon him, and brought all kinds of charges against him. In short, the royal cabin was a scene of confusion and dismay ; everybody was confounded ; such uncourtly indiscretion, even in a court madman, had never before been heard of. Nicholas himself — the Russians never speak of him as the Emperor, but always by his Christian name, with the Russian addition of his father's — Nicholas Paulovitch himself was probably the least moved of all ; but the story goes that — whether as part of his fit, or from terror on discovering his rashness, we know not — the poor offender at last threatened to kill himself, and could only be kept by violence from accomplishing his purpose.

But, let winds, or courtiers who were never at the mercy of the winds before, rave as they might, the emperor was not to be kept at home. For, in order to introduce the reader to some knowledge of his character, and as a key to the remarks which will be made in succeeding chapters, it may be stated, at this early stage of our excursions, that, *on land*, it is part of his policy to surprise the people by encountering difficulties of every kind ; flying here and flying there, in the face of danger ; accomplishing journeys and doing all kinds of things that nobody else would do. The peasant holds up his hands at the narrative — “ *Eto stranno*, It is strange, Nicholas is a wonder ! ”

And Nicholas knows well what he is about. By his activity and energy he has brought the people to look upon him as a god. His very name strikes them with awe—not with terror; for, let the admission from an Englishman be viewed in England with what prejudice it may, here, on the very threshold of his dominions, we think it but candid to declare, as the result of our intercourse with Russians, that the feelings with which he is regarded, we do not say by all, but by the many, are those of warm affection. In plain terms, THE EMPEROR IS MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY BELOVED BY THE GREAT MASS OF THE PEOPLE. From the freedom of the strictures which we shall hereafter make, it will be seen that we are not among the flatterers of the autocrat. We neither court his smiles nor fear his frowns—have neither favours to thank him for, nor favours to ask at his hand. No suspicion, therefore, can be attached to the admission of his popularity now recorded, nor to this further one, that the idea of there being *any* difficulty so great that it shall not disappear before him, is as distant from the minds of his people as the thought that the snows of winter should not vanish before the heat of summer.

The advantages which this admiration gives him in accomplishing his measures, and in keeping down the most distant attempt at revolt, are incalculably great. But, having exhausted all the themes of wonder that land-adventures could furnish, his majesty is now seeking to prolong the illusion by similar doings *at sea*. He would have visited the fleet even had the weather been fine; indeed, he spends part of every summer on the

Baltic ; but to join it in the face of what, with Russians, would pass for a serious storm, he knew would cause a sensation—give *éclat* to the manœuvres—which is precisely the effect he aims at in all he does.

To surprise—to impress with an idea of his intrepidity, coolness, and decision—is what he lives for. He has taken another emperor, who long filled the eye of Europe, for his model in this, as in some other things. “The end is not yet.” Will there be any resemblance in their closing destinies ?

Nicholas has a strange luck of being caught in storms : he never comes to sea without raising a riot. No state of the elements ever daunts him ; and the Russians say that no degree of labour from exposure in this or any other way can kill him. As yet he has shown no tendency to disease of any kind : his iron frame looks as if nothing could wear it out. He has never been known to complain of fatigue. In reviewing the fleet at this time he was eleven hours on his legs ; yet at the close he looked as fresh as if he had just risen from breakfast. Instead of hastening to repose at the palace, when the survey was over, he landed in Cronstadt to transact business. Among the first sights that greeted us, when permitted to go ashore there, was his imperial majesty, in his inseparable white cap, flying through the streets ; with true Russian fury he had thrown himself into the nearest droschky, and was off to the admiralty.

As already hinted, however, the reflections suggested by the overwhelming display of Russian strength, which we witnessed in the Baltic, will be more appropriately given in a subsequent chapter “ON THE NAVAL PROJECTS

OF THE EMPEROR," in which we shall also state the full strength of his marine, and give some account of the Russian sailor.

Meantime, let us visit together the much-famed Cronstadt, the great bulwark of Russia, and the nursery of her navy. As English sailors and English ships may before long have an errand to its walls, we shall give a pretty full account of this most interesting place.

CHAPTER III.

CRONSTADT, ITS FORTIFICATIONS AND COMMERCE.

Unkind reception of strangers—Duke of Wellington in Russia—Castles—Military and commercial harbours—Trade and way of doing business—Heavy duties on British goods—First specimen of Russian manners—Beards—Sheepskins—Paying of wages—Great number of English—The man of languages—Ships detained by the ice—Remissness of the governor—Drunkenness—Few women—Handsome public buildings—Lamps of the Virgin—Superstition of the Greek Church.

WHEN we parted company with the reader, we were gallantly fighting our way past the latest stragglers of the fleet, and the imperial steam-boat itself.

On escaping these formidable opponents we hoped to gain shelter from them, and the rising storm, in the harbour of Cronstadt ; but this was contrary to the will and pleasure of our mighty adversary, the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias. Think only of our hard fate ! After wasting so much good admiration on his fleet, he condemned us to lie nearly three days in front of that iron-girt place, bouncing up and down in our poor bark, at the mercy of a strong north-wester, which had well-nigh swamped some of his best seventy-fours ! Here we lay, in danger of drifting from our anchor every minute, without permission to put a foot on shore—literally *prisoners*, closely guarded by a savage who was sent to take care of the cargo, and seemed to regard us as part of it.

Before entering, however, on the narrative of our grievances, let us form some acquaintance with the place where they occurred.

From the length of time which the custom-house people compelled us to spend in our delightful position, and from the opportunities we afterwards had, when permitted to land, the Russians seemed *determined* that we should become fully acquainted with the strength of the fortress;—in this treating us with more regard than was paid even to the Duke of Wellington when in their country. The story goes, that the emperor showed the duke all that he thought it *safe* to exhibit, accompanying him everywhere in person, and loading him with attentions beyond what were ever shown even to royal visitors. But he wisely paid him the compliment *not to show him Cronstadt*—knowing well that the time might come, when the acquaintance which the duke's quick eye would have formed with its position and defences, would be far from convenient for Russia.

CRONSTADT—at once the Portsmouth and the Liverpool of Russia—her chief naval station, and most thriving trading-port, all in one—stands on a naked sandy island, about five miles long and one broad, in the middle of the narrowing Gulf of Finland, some 20 miles from Petersburg, five or six from the rising shores of Istria on the south, and the same distance from the flatter coast of Carelia on the north. Both channels are of equal depth; but that on the south is preferable. The island is so perfectly level, that no ground is seen in approaching it: it looks a vast fortress rising on piles rather than a town on solid ground.

So strongly is it defended by every device which skill can suggest, that many look upon it as impregnable. One part of its strength lies in the shallowness of the gulf about it: except on one small line, there is not more than eight feet of water all round it. Ships can approach only through a narrow winding channel, with 24 and 28 feet of water, along which stand several fortifications of immense strength—each as formidable as the more celebrated one off Copenhagen—and so placed that no enemy could pass without being demolished by their united fire. First comes the *Citadel*, of great strength, close by the passage which all ships must take; then follow the frowning batteries on the *Risebank* rock; and lastly, stronger than all, the *Castle of Cronschlott*, a polygon with double batteries. In addition to all these a new one is in progress, a short way to the north-west, founded on piles. This will prevent any attempt to pass up between the island and the shore.

The navigable channel is marked by buoys, which must be sought for the more cautiously as no pilot is allowed. But for the good eyes of one of his passengers, our poor captain, who had only been once here before, and who was sadly terrified by the gale, now blowing very hard, would have certainly run us aground, being unable to discover the many little flags through the spray. At last, however, we got fairly opposite the Mole, from which guns were gaping upon us as thick as the cells of a honeycomb. We have seen nothing to compare with the grim bulwark that now frowned over us.

Indeed, whether viewed in detail, or as a whole, Cron-

stadt is every way worthy to be the outpost of the largest empire in Europe. There is nothing mean or disappointing about it, as is often the case with the first places seen in approaching a new country. It speaks boldly out—an unblushing frontispiece to tales of war and despotism. The remarkable effect which it produced upon us was doubtless heightened by the animated view through which we had to pass in reaching it. First, as day dawned, we had part of the fleet hovering about us. Then, when morning advanced, we were surrounded by hundreds on hundreds of merchant ships, belonging to every nation of Europe, and all with their colours flying in honour of the occasion—French, Dutch, Greek, Sardinian, American, and, more numerous than all, English—crossing and recrossing in the most beautiful disorder.

But though this pageantry greatly added to the effect of our first view, Cronstadt must, under any circumstances, form one of the most imposing sights in the world.

If the truth must be told, we felt far from comfortable while running the terrible gauntlet of the fortresses. But there was no help for us. It was impossible to anchor till we had passed Cronschlott, which fronts the mouth of the mercantile harbour, and is separated from it by a deep roadstead, 2000 paces wide.

When at last we were permitted to lay-to, which was immediately off the military harbour, we were surrounded by steamers, barges, lighters, and half-sunk luggers. We all day kept straining our eyes and our necks to get a glimpse over the mole, but were able to

see nothing except the crowds of masts lying snugly within, as dense and naked as a wintry forest.

The bristling wall above us, surmounted by 300 cannon of the largest size, forms a triangle round the whole of the town and its bastions ; and is so high that, though the place contains 40,000 inhabitants, not a creature was visible ; the tops only of the highest houses can be seen from without. The two harbours of the fleet contained only one ship ; but in a few days both were to be again crammed with their bulky tenants, now sporting on the Baltic. Behind them lie the slips and powder-magazine, with manufactories of pitch and tar. The admiralty buildings, canals, and docks for repairing and building ships ; the foundry, furnishing 1200 tons of bombs and balls every year, storehouses to which the ships of war can come close when loading, rope-works, boat-houses, &c., are all arranged on the most modern and improved principles.

The great harbour can accommodate with ease thirty-five of the largest ships in the navy, besides their transports, &c. The *second* is intended chiefly for vessels under repair, but is also used as a winter harbour. Both communicate with another vast basin, known as the Italian lake. In all of these, ships are admirably protected from sea and storm ; but, owing to the vicinity of the Neva, there is one disadvantage, from which nothing can protect them—the freshness of the water—which destroys the ships with incredible rapidity. The *third*, or commercial harbour, lies to the north-west, close beside the others. It is defended by a rampart of beautiful granite, which is planted with cannon at every second

step, and forms the favourite promenade of the citizens, —the view seaward being very fine, and that towards the town not less interesting. This capacious basin—in which one thousand ships can be accommodated with ease—was crowded to excess at the time of our visit, and presented one of the most singular sights we have ever seen. All large ships engaged in the St. Petersburg trade unload their cargoes, to be transmitted by smaller vessels, the gulf above this being so shallow that no ship drawing more than nine feet can reach the capital. Here also their home cargoes are taken in.

For some years there has been no material variation in the amount of business done here. The present state of its trade is shown by a document in the official journal of the Russian government, the *Gazette de St. Petersbourg*, by which it appears that the number of ships which entered the port from the opening of the navigation to the 5th of November of the current year (1838), was 1343, and the number which left within the same period 1280.

We were never so forcibly struck with the value of her commerce to Russia as when reminded that very few of the ships around us had brought cargoes with them : that is, Russia has articles to export which all the nations of the world require, and send fleets of their ships to fetch ; but so little does *she* need from others, that a few of her own vessels can supply her wants at very small expense. In fact, so immensely does the *bulk*, at least, of her exports surpass that of her imports, that most ships come in ballast. Some English masters may take a cargo to Copenhagen, and then come up here empty

for a freight home; but the duties on most kinds of English goods are so unreasonable that a shipment seldom pays: the tariff, indeed, often operates as an absolute prohibition.

Consignments from abroad are nearly all made to houses in St. Petersburg; Cronstadt is a mere shipping station, not the place of business itself. The merchants of the capital either send down their clerks to superintend the loading and dispatch of their vessels, or are in constant communication with houses here who manage this kind of business. The iron (which is the worst freight a vessel gets), flax (the best, because it packs well), pitch, tallow, hides, and all the other articles of Russian export, are brought from the capital in large open lighters, like our herring-boats, which have once been white. These have two singular cross sails, and are managed by two or more men, who were the first specimens we beheld of the genuine unsophisticated Russ.

Almost every person we saw was clad in sheep-skins, made into a kind of short tight surtout, the wool turned in, and the leathery side, intended to be white, shining on the outside, black and filthy as the ungainly persons of their wearers. Every labourer has a beard flowing rough and grisly on his bosom. Knowing that these appendages are subjects of astonishment to strangers, they never pass an English ship without some drollery, such as bleating in long and helpless tones like a goat, with which the beard gives them title to claim kindred. In fact, the Russian peasants are excellent mimics, and in every way very merry, contented fellows. You never see them rowing home at night without a song, if alone,

or hearty shouts of laughter if there be two. They trim their ragged sails with great dexterity, and if the yard-arm become unruly and dash them into the sea, they clamber in again and shake themselves with all the unconcern and something of the grace of Newfoundland dogs; then set to work anew, as gay as if nothing had happened.

There is a curious scene at night on the quay behind the harbour, when all the labourers are mustered on leaving the ships where they have been employed during the day. Such an appearance of hairy, or, if it please you better, woolly gentlemen, we defy the world to match. Here are red beards enough to make cables for the fleet.

The whole of these men are registered by the police, and, in order to prevent robberies, are assembled for inspection when work is over. On inquiring about their wages, we were told that each gets $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ a-day. We thought them *well* paid for a cheap country: but we forgot where we were—in Russia the poor man's wages are not his own. If he be in the country, the nobleman on whose estate he lives claims part of his earnings; nay, if he *go away* to work in summer the law binds him to come back with part of his gain in winter; and here, in the seaport, government steps in and takes from each honest creature the lion's share of his earnings: *sixpence* is deducted each day from every man!

The quarter of ~~the~~ town near the landing-place is completely English. In some parts of the harbour you have been passing nothing but English ships; and now, under the arcades, you meet none but English captains.

All the dialects, from Falmouth to Aberdeen, may be heard in this inelegant lounge ; where “ English porter,” “ good butcher-meat,” “ ship-biscuit,” “ leather,” “ ropes,” “ candles,” and other British attractions, are painted at every door. In short, for a few months in summer the place is another Wapping. One of the best known frequenters of the piazza is a kind of walking Polyglott. He is a native of Holland, and, having been in Java, speaks some of the Eastern tongues as well as most of the European ones. We heard at least eleven languages enumerated among the acquirements of this useful ally of the ship-captains.

There is no good hotel in the town, nor even a tavern of any great pretensions ; but of dram-shops, with “ British spirits,” there is great abundance.

The harbours are generally shut up with ice before the end of November ; sometimes earlier ; and are seldom open before the end of April, or even the 12th of May. The change in winter is singular : not a foreigner is to be seen—fountains, and harbours, and sea for miles on miles around, are as solid as the land—every ship and boat is as motionless as the ramparts, and not a step is to be heard in the streets. In short, so wide a contrast is seldom to be found elsewhere. The population at that season is diminished by at least 15,000, the nobility and many of the labourers going to St. Petersburg. The winter of 1835-6, however, was an exception. The frost set in so early—nearly as soon as in the famous 1813—that forty English ships were detained the whole season. This was no slight disappointment and loss to the owners. They were all full-loaded : another night would have

saved them, but the tyrant was relentless; his icy grasp bound them too fast for escape. They made an attempt to get out. At first it promised to be successful, a breeze had sprung up, and they were making their way by cutting the ice. Very little more would have freed them; but it was too late. Difficulties multiplied as they advanced. The wind and snow fought against them with a fury known only in the Baltic: they had no choice but to return or perish.

For this ruinous detention, government is not without blame. Had more labourers been granted to clear the channel, not a ship would have been kept back. It cannot be supposed that the local authorities were tempted by the prospect of so rich a spoil as would be gained to the place, by caging such a numerous fleet for six or seven months. But the governor is chargeable at least with indecision. The fact is mentioned as one which throws some light on the "system" in Russia. Several fatal accidents had happened among the labourers; for whose lives the governor was responsible to the emperor. If more deaths occurred, he might be called to account by a stern master; but to the merchants he had no account to make. In Russia, no man knows when he is doing right, or when he is doing wrong; nor does he know the extent of the punishment he may be incurring. It was better in this instance to keep himself safe, and let the blame fall on agents whom the emperor cannot punish—the elements.

Let the fault, however, have been where it might, the English owners and merchants, both in St. Petersburg and at home, were heavy losers by the detention; not

only from the extent of capital thus locked up, but from the unforeseen expense of the crews, which were more than sufficient to run away with any profits that might afterwards be realized from the cargoes. When vessels come out, intended to remain all winter, the crews are put on half-wages. In such a case as this, when no bargain could have been made, they continue to draw their full allowance.

With so many foreign sailors amongst them, the population of the place does not, of course, present such an exclusively *Russian* aspect as that of towns in the interior. The first walk in it, however, afforded us many strange sights. Two facts struck us most forcibly. One was the unhappy propensity of the people to drinking: many were to be seen staggering, blind, helpless, rolling in the mud, in a state of the most brutal intoxication. The other national trait which most forced itself upon us, during our first survey, was the practice of secluding their women: we scarcely saw a female in the whole place. Throughout all parts of Russia, except in St. Petersburg and Moscow, ten men may always be seen for one female. They are guarded with Oriental jealousy. None but the very old or the very young are allowed to gad abroad. In Sweden and Norway the traveller finds none but women to attend him at the inns; in Russia, he finds none but men.

The houses and general arrangement are precisely like those of all the towns seen from first to last in Russia;—broad, silent streets, straight as an arrow-line—buildings, stiff and formal; the government ones of

immense extent, of regular, and generally handsome architecture, and, withoutside as within, kept in the highest order.

In fact, the order and efficiency of everything with which government is concerned strikes the stranger from the first to the last step he takes in Russia. Nothing has the look of age; nothing betrays the sloven. All appears as fresh and strong as if newly finished. Not a speck of dust is to be seen anywhere;—from the smart green swallow-tails and well-finished uniform buttons of the clerks, to the good carpets of the handsome rooms in which they write, and the very mats at the door, all is faultlessly neat. The motto of the Russian government would appear to be “Order, Decency.” If not able to reform the *private* manners of the lower classes—to clean out the dens of filth in which whole families are stewed up,—their rulers say, “Let us at least have some order in all that is *public*. Let us first give a good example ourselves, where we can enforce it. In evil, example is contagious, and why should it not sometimes be so in good? If the lesson be not tacitly adopted, having reformed ourselves a little, we may, by-and-by, with better grace *compel* the people to do something towards reforming their habits.”

The glittering lamp suspended by its gilded chain before a picture of the Virgin, in the corner of all public rooms, and in some private ones, reminded us that we were among the votaries of a new religion—new at least to us. This practice is universal in the Greek church, whose sway, it now for the first time struck us, is one of the widest ever exercised by any church. The little

lamp which we here first beheld, under the pole as it were, we found almost daily throughout months of constant travel—in the endless plains of Russia—among the Greeks in Turkey and Asia—and finally in the fair Greece itself.

The last time, we remember, it was in our small chamber beneath the hoary rocks of Delphi. As it glimmered pale above us, through broken slumbers, we at one time fancied it the sacred flame that night and day was fed in the temple of the oracle—our dreams were in the sunny and classic isles of the Egean which we had left. At another, it seemed the taper of some forlorn wanderer, clad in furs and icicles, seeking his way among the arctic snows—our fancies had fled back to the cheerless land where this usage first met us.

What a wide and what an enduring tie is religion! A similar faith unites the most distant regions, and the most dissimilar tribes—makes as brothers the elegant Greek who has a history of centuries, and the barbarous “stranger,” whom we heard of but yesterday.

Our first visit to a Russian place of worship powerfully reminded us how easily the human mind imposes on itself. The Greek church is, in many respects, purer than the Roman. In nothing are they more distinct than in the detestation with which images are regarded by the Greek Catholics. Neither as objects of worship, nor as ornaments in churches, are *solid* figures of any kind tolerated amongst them. But, mark the deception which its members practise on themselves: pictures—*surface* representations of the Saviour and Virgin—they

not only tolerate, but treat with exactly the same veneration as that which the condemned Roman Catholics show to their statues. Where lies the difference? The Greeks may plead that they keep within the *letter* of the revealed word; but from the *spirit* of the gospel they wander, surely, as far as their opponents.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CUSTOM-HOUSE; OR, THE DELIGHTS OF VISITING THE AUTOCRAT.

Delays on arriving—Compared with those of other countries—Searchers—Luggage sealed—Captivity—Guardian—Annoyance to ship captains—Danger of letters, and of Russian money—Passports—Disadvantages of being “a gentleman”—Books detained—Tyranny of underlings—Advice about steamers, &c.

THIS is a chapter of woes.

It is intended solely for such as have travelled; who, from its contents, will have the gratification of learning that others have been treated as scurvily as themselves. Yet should untravelled readers wish to profit by our costly experience; or, what is hardly to be expected in these hard-hearted days, should any be moved with sympathy for travellers in difficulty, they too may cast an eye over this sad narrative.

To be more explicit: the annoyances to which we were subjected at Cronstadt, from the absurdity of the custom-house arrangements—and to which all strangers coming to this country by sea are exposed—afford an excellent specimen of the way in which things are managed in Russia.

These delays were so vexatious. that, during the first ebullitions of our wrath, we heartily joined in all the railing that was ever uttered against Russian barbarism.

Let others take warning by our example, and never seek to visit this country in a trading vessel, but go at once by the steamer to St. Petersburg.

The troubles alluded to are attributable to the regulation which requires that every ship bound for the capital must first be inspected, measured, sealed, reported, and we know not what, before passing this inevitable outpost : forms which ship-captains find so perplexing, that they would rather go with little profit to any other country than come here for great gain. And, if they complain, what must the general traveller have to say, who in other parts of the continent is very little troubled by police or custom-house regulations? In most countries, if there be no quarantine, you step ashore the moment you arrive, throw your passport to the people of the house, and never hear a word more on the subject till you call for it on going away. As for the *visites* at frontiers, the experienced traveller is never annoyed by them ; and he would be equally indifferent to the customs' gentry in Russia, were it not for the number of hands through which he is bundled, and the great loss of time they occasion.

The first of the business began some miles below Cronstadt, where we had to lay-to for a visit from the guard-ship. Papers and passports were here examined, and we rejoiced in the thought that we should be at liberty to land when we pleased, on reaching the port, so as to catch the first steam-boat for St. Petersburg ; but our troubles were only beginning. After casting anchor, no one came near us for hours. At last appeared a boat, with a strong crew, from the custom-house—the officer in a blue uniform-coat, the men in short grayish sea-

coats, with green jackets below, and belts girding the waist—small round green caps, seamed with yellow cord, wide striped breeches, and boots reaching to the knee—most Russian in their looks, but without the beard. Then began the process of sealing up the hatches; but as they had not brought enough of their filthy wax and gray tape, it was necessary to row ashore for more. We thought we should be allowed to accompany them—but no; we must remain in custody of the man left on board, till it might suit the harbour-master's pleasure to decide our fate.

When the boat returned, the sealing task was continued; but not till the officer had got plenty of "*Essen, Essen,*" as he greedily called it; for all of them have German enough to insist on meat and drink from the foreign captains. His copious meal of beef and sausage, washed down with schnapps and strong ale, had not softened his temper; for on discovering some slight omission on the captain's part the bear again mustered German enough to exclaim "*Strafe, Strafe!*" his eyes glistening with delight at the idea of inflicting a fine on the worthy man who had fed him.

The sealing was now resumed. Not a particle was left open. Our very writing-materials, nay, our walking-sticks, and an old umbrella, were tied together and adorned with the government seal, till the officers at St. Petersburg, twenty miles away, should examine them, and decide whether they could be admitted to the country, without injury to the life of his majesty, or the fortunes of his subjects. We were not allowed even a change of linen.

Letters were strictly searched for; and we should advise the traveller not to bring any *sealed* ones with him if he wish to keep out of trouble: in case of doubt, they search the person, and should any be found, if a fine be not imposed, they will at least send them to the post-office for you.

Particular inquiries were made whether we had any Russian money; a point on which many have got into serious difficulties on coming here. It is the law of Russia that you may take as much paper money *out* of the country as you please, but none of it is ever allowed to come *back*. The object of this regulation is to prevent the introduction of forged notes; but it at times operates very cruelly. People not aware of the law, taking money at other ports from captains or friends, glad to get rid of any surplus notes, are liable, on arriving in Russia, not only to confiscation of the whole, but also to fine and imprisonment. The captain of a ship from Finland was lately placed in great danger, by a mistake of this kind. What heightens the peril is, that you are supposed not to have any money (Russian *silver* is not included in this law) till you have cleared with the custom-house, which may not be for several days after entering the country; and how is the stranger to pay his way in the meantime? We had very nearly fallen into a scrape on this head, by inadvertently drawing a couple of hundred roubles, to meet unavoidable expenses till we should reach the capital. When our captain saw the notes, he trembled for the safety of his good ship; but fortunately they were never found by any of the officers, and neither confiscation nor stripes ensued. The

incident shows the beauty of the Russian "system:" neither captain nor passenger knows what is right or what is wrong. If they would tell people what is forbidden, or what they have to do, there would be no difficulty; but their principle is, "Find out these things for yourself: it is not our business to keep you out of scrapes, but to get you into them, if possible."

When hatches and luggage were all sealed, we made sure that now we should be permitted to go ashore;—but patience a little longer. There being nobody to interpret between us and the officers, we could not comprehend all the reasons given for the delay, but understood that we must still remain in custody of the guardian—a personage placed on board each ship the moment she arrives, to prevent smuggling, &c. A second boat's crew came, but not for us: they brought an officer to inspect the seals, and add a few more to some trifling things which had been overlooked. A third boat came, but the guardian doubted whether he could part with us. Night was now at hand, and we were becoming obstreperous—all in vain.

The boat which did at last come for us, the fifth in the course of the day, was forced to return back without us, it being now too late to do business at the public offices, where we had to appear. The captain went on shore to fight for us; but the only comfort he brought was, that "Thim nasty fellows, the Russians," would not, on any account, allow us to quit the vessel till next day. The poor man was in a sad fright about some gunpowder which he had on board. Whether from political or commercial jealousy we know not, but by the Russian

laws not an ounce of this article is allowed to be brought into the country, under pain of total confiscation both of ship and cargo. Some masters surrender what they may have ; but the trouble of getting it restored again is so great, that they generally take the shorter method of throwing it overboard.

When next day came, there was so much sea that few boats could move out of the harbour. Being anxious, however, to effect our liberation, we rowed ashore, in charge of an officer connected with the harbour-office. From the violence of the storm, it took us nearly an hour to do what may usually be done in ten minutes : the men could scarcely keep the boat off the mole, where we ran the risk of being dashed to pieces.

We were first taken to the harbour-master, and were bowled from one set of clerks to another, making declarations about ourselves, our objects in coming to Russia, and our luggage. After being detained some hours at this place, we were twice paraded round the ramparts a mile or two, with an officer marching beside us, first to the custom-house, and then to Mr. Foster, secretary to the Admiral of the Fleet (*ex-officio* Governor of Cronstadt), who gave us passports for St. Petersburg, ten roubles being charged for each,—a fee from which all travellers designated as noblemen, officers, or clergymen, are exempted, as well as from others which we paid afterwards. Having been described simply as “ English gentlemen,” we were included among the ignoble crew of merchants, bank-directors, county members, or such “ base bisognos,” who alone have the privilege of paying taxes for travelling in this happy country.

There was yet another form to go through at the Swedish consul's, before whom it was necessary to make affidavit of the number of shirts, coats, nightcaps, pairs of boots, watches, shirt-pins, &c., in our possession ; with warning that if *more* were found when the seals on our trunks should be opened, all we had would be liable to be dealt with according to the will and pleasure of his majesty the emperor.

Before the whole of these matters could be despatched, the day was far gone. Now, however, we were at liberty, and made a visit to our worthy consul, Mr. Booker, who was indignant at the treatment we had met with ; but comforted us with the assurance that we had escaped very cheaply compared with some foreigners. From one delay or other we could not leave Cronstadt till past noon on the third day after reaching it. In any other country all our business would have been over in half an hour.

Having by these delays been prevented from taking the morning steamer, we were forced to proceed to St. Petersburg in our old ship. But even after reaching the capital, several days elapsed before we got our luggage. Not a particle of it could we touch. We were told to be thankful if we got it within a week. The ship had first to pass the bridge on the Neva, which is open only for an hour or so at ten in the morning, when perhaps more ships are waiting than could get through in double the time ; and after passing the bridge, we had to wait the pleasure of the custom-house inspectors. They gave us very little trouble when the things were opened ; much less than we should have had entering by land. Our few books and maps, including even poor innocent " Ma-

dame de Genlis," were sealed up and sent to the office of the censor, who having duly examined the same, restored them a few days after.

In no part of the world, as already stated, has the traveller such tedious and provoking formalities to go through. Even in Holland, where all is stiff and formal, he gets very little trouble. When we visited that country, the ship was detained a couple of hours at Helvoetsluys; her papers were examined, and a guardian put on board, who accompanied us up the Maes to Rotterdam; but all the time the passengers were not once spoken to, being permitted to walk ashore when they pleased, and to take as much of their luggage as might be necessary, till they found it convenient to call an officer to examine and liberate the remainder. In Austria, too (by no means famed for laxity towards foreigners), there is nothing to complain of: landing at Trieste or Venice, the traveller gets off immediately. But in Russia the annoyances are so great, to strangers entering by land as well as to those coming by sea, that we have known travellers who have visited every country of Europe, vow that they would not enter Russia again for any temptation.

It is alleged that these annoyances are expressly intended to keep foreigners away, the emperor being jealous of the spread of liberal opinions, and unwilling to expose his subjects to contagion. But this can scarcely be the reason; for in no country are strangers better treated, once the first annoyances are over. It is only among the underlings that there is rudeness and rapacity; when you have to do with the *heads* of any department all goes well. Nothing can surpass the courtesy with which every assistance and explanation is given.

The grievances complained of ought properly to be attributed to a vicious system, which has been so long established that, like other abuses, it cannot be easily reformed. Let every traveller lift his voice against them, and before many years it will be as pleasant to visit Russia, as any other country. The government is sensitive about the opinions of foreigners, and at this moment, in particular, is anxious to stand well with the rest of Europe. Some proof of this is given by the indulgence granted to the Lübeck steam-boats, which proceed direct to St. Petersburg, where passengers have their luggage examined immediately on their arrival.

CHAPTER V.

LANDING AT ST. PETERSBURG.

Approach by sea—Distant view—Disappointment—Unfavourable site—
Contrast with other capitals—Strange adventures—Deserted streets—
First attempt in a droschky—"Pady! Pady!"—A word to the
stranger.

OUR first excursion in the Russian capital was one of the strangest ever made.

We had sailed pleasantly up the bay of Cronstadt, a light breeze carrying us quickly past the wooded slopes adorned with *Oranienbaum*, *Peterhof*, and seats of the nobility. We met at least a dozen steam-boats, some with passengers, some on the business of government, and some tugging ships across the shallows. The great number of luggers and small vessels that had gone down and left their masts projecting above the surface, show that the navigation is not always so pleasant as it was this sunny afternoon.

The Neva is met about sixteen miles from Cronstadt ; but the bay continues wide for some miles farther. Long before leaving the wider part, our attention had been drawn from all other objects by the more exciting view of St. Petersburg. Its broad domes glittering with silver stars, and tall spires piercing the sky like pyramids of gold, seen many miles away, make the stranger fancy that he is approaching an Oriental, rather than a European

city. But, fair as the sight in some respects is, the sea-view of St. Petersburg is, on the whole, a disappointment. It can by no means be compared with the approach to Copenhagen: it is too flat, and presents no imposing *masses* of architecture to the gulf. The domes are scattered wide away from each other, and no houses are to be seen uniting them; they are like the churches of so many separate villages, rather than the ornaments of one compact capital. You long wonder where the great St. Petersburg can have hid itself behind those mud islands, those wide straggling wood-yards, and those red barrack-looking structures that lie so desolate on the flats. The metropolis of a great empire should stand boldly out on the water; but this one chooses to steal away among reeds and bulrushes, sending up a few blazing skyrockets, more like signals of distress than proofs of splendour.

Patience, patience, rude stranger! The shade of Peter the Great will be amply avenged when you get *in* to his capital, and see what it is. But remember, it is only when you have *entered* that St. Petersburg fills you with astonishment. Other places make all their show without; here it is all within. The city cannot help its position. It would look better if there were some heights in or near it; there is not one as high as a candlestick in the whole region. The islands and shores about the mouth of the Neva are perfectly level. They can do wonderful things in Russia; but they have not been able to raise mountains where nature, for miles and miles around, placed only duck-ponds and ague-marshes.

With all our disappointment, however, we should have

been glad to have got into the Russian capital, when we found the treacherous breeze dying away, and likely to leave us motionless all night within the sound of its bells. There was barely enough of wind to carry us through the twisting intricate line marked out by flags, as affording the only safe passage for vessels of any size. The young pilot, who here joined, took care to tell us that there are but seven and a half feet of water allowed by the charts, while the wide sands on each side, where a few people were fishing in small boats, have scarcely two and a half feet upon them. That we might have no doubt on the subject, and to let the captain know the value of the services which he was not inclined to pay so high for as demanded, he managed to let us touch a moment, exclaiming "Ship's aground, sir!"* to the great confusion of our friend. We got safely off, however; but were forced to drop anchor in the mouth of the river, where the first lonely houses begin; there being no wind to carry us against the current up to the centre of the city. We had been nine days from Stockholm.

Here, then, commenced our landing adventures. We were rowed ashore *within sight* of the principal part of the city, but a long way from it, in some remote suburb

* English is literally the language of the sea. Our nautical terms are used all over the world, not only in addressing English sailors, but between the natives of foreign countries themselves. This is more particularly the case, however, in the north of Europe. A Swedish mate gives nearly all his directions in English; and here we find a Russian pilot employing the same language to a Swede, taking it for granted that, whatever country he might belong to, he would understand enough of English to enable him to communicate on matters connected with the ship.

—Rotherhithe, Redriff, or such like place, perhaps ; consequently we had to seek our way for two or three miles, with scarcely a word of the language to seek it with. What was worse, we had not the *Russian* name of the street we wanted ; and the *English* one was of no use. Had we been able to pronounce the *Galernoy Oulitza*, we could at once have been rowed or driven to it ; but to ask for it as the *English Back Line*, by which it is known among the British settlers in these parts, only made the bearded passenger pity our helplessness.

We addressed a large crowd of respectable people in French, but none understood us. On and on we wandered, always with a correct idea of the quarter our contemplated resting-place was in, but prevented by canals from getting the way we wanted. St. Petersburg is not like London, or any other capital where the numerous inns or lodging-places enable the stranger, even though he cannot speak the language, to get at least shelter and food, till he finds some one who can help him. Here there are very few hotels or places of entertainment, even in the best part of the city, and none at all in the remote ones. Had we seen a sign, or even an “ open door,” we should soon have taken possession in one way or other, and not have run the chance of wandering all night in the streets. In London, a hackney-coach, or cab or omnibus, may be got at the most remote corner of its wide-spread suburbs ; but here, after walking miles, we saw no vehicle of any kind.

What a desert the place seemed ! and, except in the very centre, it is a most desolate city. The buildings, you would say, have outgrown the population ; only they

all look so fresh and well painted, that they cannot be quite abandoned. Houses, houses—streets, streets, and very handsome ones; we thought they were never to have done; but still no people. It was broad daylight, yet all was silent, all inhospitable.

At last one person did address us. He had overheard our English; but, strange to say of a Russian, though, by his own confession, he had been three years in London, and two in Paris, he knew very little English, and no French. It is a proof of the paucity of inns here, and shows what sort of a place it is, when this man—an inhabitant—did not know of a single place we could go to; although we were at the time not far from a very important part of the city.

Forward we still hied, evidently getting into a more populous region. The tide of life was surging stronger; still no help, no sign of land. It was now getting dark, but we did not lose courage. We passed a theatre, and churches, and squares, and bridges—when, lo! an acquaintance appears—no less a personage than Peter the Great himself—the very monarch whose proud work we had been thinking evil of, come out on horseback, with his laurel crown on his head, to assist and welcome us. We knew him and his horse, and the very stone they were standing on, quite well—from pictures, namely; and the first glimpse of him dispelled our fears: we had reached friendly and frequented haunts—the very centre of the capital.

But which way to go? Peter could not be expected to accompany us, for it had begun to rain.

At this moment aid was sent in the shape of a long-bearded droschky-man. He saw we were at a loss—

knew what we wanted, though we could not speak a word to him—and, as he had an honest face and intelligent eye, we at once took our seats in his vehicle, leaving him to dispose of us at his pleasure.

“ *Traktir! Traktir!*” said he, in Russian. “ *Jah! Jah!*” answered we, in German, never doubting that *Traktir* meant an inn of some kind or other.

But then his droschky puzzled us. We had often heard of droschkies; but to hear and read of droschkies is one thing, and to be called on to sit in one, without getting a lesson in the art, is quite another. We were completely mystified, and no less completely amused, by our strange position: we knew not how to sit, whether sideways or astride, whether with face or back foremost. *N’importe!* It was neck or nothing with us. So away we splashed over bridge and stone, clinging to the vehicle as we best could, laughing at ourselves, and, doubtless, making others laugh to see us sitting so funnily. Droschkies, we thought, must be very insecure things; for we were often like to be tumbled out from our awkwardness. But these difficulties our zealous driver did not see; or, if he saw, he heeded them not.

“ *Pady, pady!*” was his order. Clear the way—here come two foreigners to look at the emperor, and to pay me well. “ *Pady, pady!*”

With all this, however, we were never coming to a stand-still; and we knew nothing about where he was driving us to. We had all along been on the outlook for a shop where German or French might be spoken, and were in the very streets for them; but it was so dark that we could scarcely read the sign-boards. At last, in a broad and handsome street, we caught the cheering

inscription, "English Tailor, from London;" and, never doubting that we should here find help, we made our charioteer stop, that, through the expected interpreter, we might hold some parley with him about the place he might be taking us to. But, to our dismay, no one was to be found that could speak to us; so *Pady, pady!* was again the word, and, in a short time, our doubts were dispelled, when the horse stopped, and his master pointed, with a grin of delight at his own sagacity, to the shield of a German tavern, inscribed "*Gasthaus, Wittwe.*" This was nearly what we wanted; but not exactly the place itself. The widow's waiters soon told the man where we wished to go, and back we started all the way over the ground he had brought us; for, had we but taken the good Peter's hint, we were close by the desired locality when he first appeared to us.

A kind reception soon made us forget our street vagaries. They had not been altogether unprofitable, for we had seen and learnt more of this huge place the first night of our arrival, than many do in the first week. The remote outskirts we should never have seen at all, but for our unwonted landing. They had also taught us a lesson, which we record for the benefit of other wanderers—never to enter a strange city without knowing at least the name of the street they are in search of. Even had our difficulties been greater, we should have forgotten them on seeing that our arrival had made *one* creature happy—the poor droschky-man; who, for the four roubles he had gained, bowed himself to the ground, and "kissed the hem of our garment," after the fashion of his country, as grateful and as much overjoyed as if he had driven the Tzarevitch.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AMONG THE SPLENDOURS OF THE RUSSIAN CAPITAL.

Hospitality—Letters of introduction—Danger of giving *names* in books on Russia—Numerous sights—The palaces—Hermitage, &c.—Peter's cottage—Magnificence of the principal streets—Style of architecture—~~How~~ the city has been raised—Proprietors compelled to build—Buildings-board—Foot-pavements—Effects on the ladies—Italian architects—Reflections—Perishable splendour—Critical situation of the houses—Inundations.

THE two great subjects to which all writers on St. Petersburg first turn their readers' attention are, its hospitality and its sights; for both of which it has long been famed, beyond most of the cities of Europe.

Of its *hospitality* we also should wish to say much. But nothing being so offensive to the really hospitable man as the parade of his courtesies in print, we shall simply state that we had not been long amongst its inhabitants until we had ample proof of the justice of the assertion, that nowhere is the stranger honoured with such unbounded attention.

We cannot leave this topic altogether, however, without adding a note of advice for our travelling countrymen, regarding the necessity of providing themselves with good introductions, before coming here. Englishmen are always too negligent of this. We have known some set out on the tour of Europe without a single letter, beyond

a pretty substantial one from Coutts's or Herries's ! Now, without recommending the German system, which is to get a trunk-full of letters, when they can be got, and to deliver every one of them, even should there be one hundred and twenty (the number brought over by a recent visitor when he came to make a book about us), we should advise the stranger who wishes to enjoy his visit to St. Petersburg, to furnish himself with at least the twentieth part of the German allowance ; and if but one-half of these are as well attended to as ours were, he will long look back with pleasure to the happy and instructive hours enjoyed on these distant shores.

Without introductions, no stranger can make his way in the Russian capital, with them, he will be loaded with attentions. Many Englishmen who come here are so coldly welcomed that they go away disappointed with the people and the country. But they are themselves to blame for having found St. Petersburg naught and unprofitable. A single good letter would have enabled them to spend their time both instructively and agreeably. Travellers passing by Berlin cannot do better than provide a few letters there ; such, from the present intimacy between the two courts, being the most influential that can be procured.

Were we to follow out the German example we ought, at least, to give a list of all who entertained us, even though the reason given at the commencement of the chapter may prevent us from enlarging on their kindness ; but English taste repudiates the trick of giving weight to a work by filling it with eminent names, and thereby throwing the responsibility of its statements on individuals who cannot answer for themselves.

Another fashion—we will not call it a German one, because only *one* German has been found capable of adopting it—is, to use the opportunities which introductions give, for laying bare the sacred privacies of domestic life—for sporting with the afflictions(!) of the family who unsuspectingly gave the ribald jester shelter at their board—and sometimes even for traducing the character of his entertainers! This fashion, however much its adoption might add to the piquancy of his work, no English writer will ever adopt.

The consideration, however, which principally induces us to refrain from mentioning *names* in these pages, is the danger in which the most respectable individuals have sometimes been involved, by the rashness of travellers in this respect. Foreigners who allude to politics in their works ought never to give the name of any private friend; for many have been exposed to merciless persecution—to the dungeon, and to exile—in consequence of having been mentioned by travellers whose political remarks are unpalatable to the government. To be named in such a work, were it only in the way of well-meant compliment, or thoughtless gratitude, at once exposes the individual to the suspicion of having furnished the obnoxious intelligence, although he may not have opened his lips on politics. There are other continental states also, where the same caution would be necessary: there is an English book of Travels in Southern Italy, which had the effect of compromising some of the first noblemen of the country so seriously, that they were thrown into prison, and never again allowed to breathe the air of freedom.

The *sights* of St. Petersburg cannot be dismissed so briefly as its hospitality; yet on these also we shall try to be as little tedious as possible. In fact, all the objects worthy of notice—churches, palaces, public buildings—have been so fully and so ably described by Dr. Granville, or other travellers, that it were idle to attempt going over the same ground with them in a work of this nature. Mere sight-*seeing* is the most wearisome occupation in the world, except it be that of *reading* about sights. Chairs, tables, wash-hand basins, mirrors—empresses' bedrooms, and emperors' writing-tables—are most useful, and may be most edifying things in their way; as well as imperial nightcaps and pincushions; but no one who has endured the infliction of following a gilded lackey from room to room—up stairs and down stairs—from pantry to garret—over miles of carpet and wax-cloth; or, taking out-of-doors work, no one who has trudged through enchanted gardens and mazy woods, seven acres square, adorned with metal waterfalls, and timber grottoes, and peopled with playful dolphins and spouting lions, with Dianas, Apollos, Mercuries, Fawns, Floras, Phœbuses—Neptunes and their cars, Ariadnes and their bulls—long-legged cranes and long-legged nymphs, frogs, gladiators, tritons—monsters of every shape, and size, and colour that stucco and gilding can produce; no one who has discharged these melancholy duties,—in every country the heaviest of all the taxes that the traveller pays for his more instructive pleasures,—will be surprised that a fellow-sufferer declines to give a narrative which would only revive forgotten woes.

If it were not treason against the sight-loving tribe, we

should say that there are ways in which both the travellers' and the readers' time may be much more profitably employed, than on the mere shows of foreign countries. A day passed among the crowds of a great capital—in the streets—in the unvisited purlieus—in the markets—the bazaars—wherever the moving, *living* multitude may be seen—is more instructive, ay, and more amusing, than a dozen of days spent among glittering rooms and gingerbread pleasure-gardens; and he who could faithfully describe what he sees in such scenes, would make a more attractive book, and deserve better of his country, than all the marvel-hunters that ever wrote. A single hour spent in the heavy vapours of an hospital, or in the cold cells of a public prison—full of sad and painful thoughts as that hour may be—will give more real insight into the spirit and character of a nation, than can be drawn from whole months frittered away among the thousand artificial sights which the idle most delight in.

That we are using a wise discretion in not attempting a minute, day-by-day description of St. Petersburg, the reader will himself readily admit, on hearing the bare names of all the places he would have to wander through under only one division of its sights—namely, the palaces. First would come the *Winter Palace*, which, with its dependencies, forms the largest royal residence in Europe, being capable of lodging twelve thousand souls; or rather, it was capable: for, since we left Russia, it has unfortunately been burnt down, and, such is Russian energy, again raised from its ashes with a splendour scarcely inferior to that in which it formerly gloried.

Next, were we to attempt a minute description, would follow what may be called continuations of the palace just named, the *Hermitage* and *Theatre of the Court*, the *Marble Palace* and that of *Constantine*—all on the Neva. Even without leaving the capital, we should still have, in addition to these, a long series of royal residences to visit ; such as the *old* palace *Mikhailoff*, near the summer garden, built by the Emperor Paul, and the scene of his assassination—now occupied as a school for young engineers ; the *Taurida* palace (in the Vosskresenskaia street), presented by Catherine to Potemkin for conquering the Crimea, but afterwards purchased by government ; the *new* palace *Mikhailoff* (between the old one of the same name and the Nefskoï Prospekht), finished in 1832, as a residence for the Grand Duke Michael, brother of the emperor ; the *Anitchkoff* Palace (in the Nefskoï, near the bridge of the Fontanka), built by the Empress Elizabeth in 1748, and occupied as the private palace of the present emperor. Such are the names of a few of the palaces in the capital. On the islands, or in the immediate neighbourhood, are the *Summer Palace* of the late Emperor, and that built by Nicholas ; *Catharinenhof*, &c. &c. *Peterhof*, a favourite seat of the emperor, on the bay of Cronstadt ; and *Tzarkoie-Celo* (meaning “ the village of the Tzar ”) 15 miles on the Moscow road, are familiar to all who have opened a book on Russia.

Were we to give a description of any of the palaces, it would be of the little cottage in which Peter the Great lived, while laying the foundations and superintending the progress of his new capital. Many relics and me-

morials of him are preserved about St. Petersburg, as well as at Peterhof and Cronstadt ; but this is by far the most interesting. It is a simple Scotch " but and ben," but with a greater profusion of windows than Scotch cottages can boast of. The small sleeping-room is immediately opposite the entrance ; but neither in it, nor in the other rooms, is door or ceiling high enough for a tall visitor. It is built of logs, painted to resemble bricks. The walls are hung with coarse canvas, whitewashed ; the only piece of luxury being round the doors, which are edged with a pennyworth of flowered paper. To preserve this modest mansion from decay, a good brick house has been built round it ; within which it nestles as dry as a kernel in its shell. In the space between the cottage and its case, lies a very appropriate relic of the illustrious apprentice in the dock-yards of Saardam—the boat built by his own hands, in which he rowed about the Neva to his different works. The only furniture in the room are a few glass-cases, with rings, lamps, medals, and other remembrances of the first tenant, all under charge of an old soldier, who lives by selling tapers to those who worship at the rude shrine standing in the corner of one of the chambers,

In these humble rooms, then, scarcely ten feet square, lived the great founder of this city of palaces ! Touched by the simplicity and self-denial manifested by his preference of this plain mansion, we were about to leave the spot with increased admiration for one of the most remarkable men that ever lived ; but, as we were turning away, a woman in respectable mourning came in. She was in deep grief—bowed herself on her knees before the

shrine, and with sobs smote her forehead to the dust. It was a mother mourning for her son. The thought now struck us, that he whom we had just called "great" also had a son, but the remembrance of that son's terrible death made us change the epithet into "cruel."

Could the prison-scenes of Alexei Petrovitch, reckless though he was, be blotted from history, the name of Peter would be one of the brightest in its ample page.

The list of public edifices in St. Petersburg is larger even than that of its palaces. There are churches, prisons, hospitals, cabinets, libraries, seminaries, museums, picture galleries, theatres, barracks, &c. &c., more than could be walked through in a month, or read of in a week. For the reasons already given, however, no attempt will be made to describe the whole of these: all that is here proposed, is to notice only a few of the more modern and most striking sights. Meanwhile let us say a few words of the *general* impression which it produces on the stranger.

No capital of Europe surprises so much as St. Petersburg. The width and regularity of the streets—the long lines of houses, generally of uniform plan, and all looking as if new—the breadth and solidity of the quays—the stout masonry of the canals—the excellence of the pavement and the comfort of the foot-walk; these are so different from all presented by other continental cities, that the stranger is literally amazed. The magnitude of the scale on which every thing is done, and the solidity of much (we do not say *all*) that has been reared, admirably correspond with the greatness of the empire. Another consideration which increases the stranger's wonder, is

the expenditure which they must have occasioned. Stones and pillars, many tons weight, are lavished as if they could have been charmed into their place by a word; but, in fact, each of them had to be brought an immense distance, at an enormous expense. That the stranger should be surprised on reflecting, that all this has been done in so short a time—has risen like a vision of the night—some may think superfluous, for he has been well prepared for it; yet when he feels himself actually in the midst of the splendours of this new city, walking upon and touching them, he may be excused for marvelling, and almost for doubting, whether the surrounding scene could really have been but a neglected marsh, or, at most, a fishing-village of poor Fins, little more than a hundred years ago! Palaces, cathedrals—triumphal arches, and monumental statues, all of most tasteful design and most costly workmanship, standing in thick and fair array, where so lately the nest of the bittern or the floating cradle of the water-hen were, the proudest works of architecture! It *must* be a dream!

One point which particularly excites surprise is, the freshness, the seeming newness of every thing. It is not as in the ancient capitals of Europe, where the eye is offended by whole streets of houses decaying and out of order: here, things have not had time to go wrong; and, what is more, they are not allowed to do so. The plasterer's trowel and the painter's brush are set to work every year, all over the city. Nor are repairs left to the caprice or indolence of the individual proprietor. Government steps in—for in this country, government does everything—and tells him you *must* make such and such

repairs. Your *ukase* is a powerful conservator. It can create, too, as well as preserve; for much of St. Petersburg has been built by compulsion: it would never have attained half its present magnitude, but for the interference of the authorities, who used to say, in very plain terms, "You who have this income or that, this or that number of houses, are hereby called upon to build forthwith so many more; and you who have but half of what your neighbour possesses, must just follow with half of what he is put down for."

Everything connected with the streets, new buildings, &c., is under the direction of a Board, without whose sanction it is not allowed to make any alteration even in an old building. No man can follow his own plan as to the *outside* of a house, whatever he may do *within*; a system which may sometimes press hard on individuals, but is on the whole a good one, preventing those monstrosities with which other capitals abound, when every proprietor is left to indulge his own fantasies. The good effect of this arbitrary way of doing things is well shown by the handsome foot-pavements. These English luxuries are so rare abroad, that we were not prepared to find almost every street here well furnished with them. Twenty years ago, scarcely one was to be seen; but the mystery was explained, when we were told that it was all in consequence of the Emperor Alexander's visit to London, after the Peace, when he was so much delighted with our pavements that, the moment he returned, an *ukase* appeared, enjoining every proprietor to lay the footpath in front of his house with slabs. It was of no avail to remonstrate. The party might say that his

means were inadequate to this unexpected outlay; his want of means could not be put in balance with the Emperor's wishes. There was no remedy but to obey; for if the Sultan has but one short answer to those who refuse his application for money, "Compliance, or the bastinado," so his neighbour, the Tzar, with equal brevity, declares "Obedience, or Siberia!"

These *trottoirs* have not only done much towards improving the look and comfort of his capital, but have also, to a certain extent, been auxiliary in reforming the habits of his subjects. Formerly, scarcely a woman was to be seen in the streets of St. Petersburg; the stones were so rough, or the mire so deep, that the poor creatures could not venture out. They sat stewing at home, without sun or air, in the close unhealthy atmosphere of their stoves, with cheeks as white as plants trained in darkness. But now, since the foot-pavements have enabled them to make the wonderful discovery that they can walk, the St. Petersburg ladies come boldly abroad; not in such numbers as the fair sex of other countries, but still in very creditable proportion, considering the recent date of their enfranchisement. These innovations have also enabled them to make another agreeable discovery—that exercise of this kind gives a health to the frame more vigorous than that derived from the midnight waltz, and lends a bloom to the cheek more attractive than that of the rouge of which they formerly made so liberal a use.

Every country has a style of architecture, or, if that word be too high, of building, peculiar to itself; and nowhere is the style of each more conspicuous than in its

capital. Russia also has a style of its own ; but there is little of it seen in St. Petersburg. He who comes here expecting to find something national and characteristic in the general appearance of the houses will be completely disappointed : except for the churches, a stranger, in walking through it, might suppose himself in some new city of Italy, of France, or of Germany : for it has a little of the manners of each of these countries ; being precisely such a place as would be made by taking the large plain houses of the *Rue de la Paix*, of Paris, or of the new streets of Frankfort, and uniting them in straight endless streets with some of the ornamental buildings of the different towns of Italy. Little wonder that it has not a *Russian* look ; for, until lately, no Russian had any share in adorning it : not only the palaces but all the streets were built by *foreign*, chiefly Italian, architects.

Among the various surprises excited by St. Petersburg, the greatest of any felt by the stranger is—that it should have been built here at all. Whatever the city may have gained in strength against an enemy, by being placed in this position, it has lost in security from inundations, as well as in beauty. The object of its founder in planting it among inaccessible swamps, was to render it more safe from his active foes ; but the ground is so low that the Neva at times sweeps irresistibly over a great part of the city. The inundations have often risen so high as to threaten the complete submersion of the finest quarters. In 1828, the waters raged over every barrier, and occasioned great loss, not only of property, but of life. The Tzar wept like a child when he looked

from his palace windows, and saw the disastrous spectacle. The height to which the waters reached in many of the most crowded streets, is still shown by a line on the houses, especially in the Vassilii-island, where the destruction was dreadful. Eye-witnesses say, that the heaps of dead bodies taken from the houses, and piled up till the water should retire, and permit the earth to receive them, formed the most appalling sight they ever beheld—melancholy monuments of their “great” emperor’s energy and rashness. Had he but gone ten miles farther up the river, a site would have been found fully as advantageous for commerce, the stream being navigable all the way, and much more safe; the height of the banks above the water being such that no flood can overflow them.

What a place would St. Petersburg have become in a situation presenting greater natural beauties! It would then have been the most beautiful city in the world: now it is only the most wonderful.

Yet the beauty and regularity of this capital become less wonderful when we consider how different its origin has been from that of others. Other cities have grown up at random, from small beginnings. They are the work of centuries; each succeeding improver has to contend against, or remove, what has been done by his predecessors. But St. Petersburg is the creation of a day, and having been begun at once on a great and regular plan, its beautifiers have only had to *add* to what was done, not to *undo*. Nor are they hampered by what, in many continental cities, renders improvements impossible,—an insurmountable line of fortifying walls, whose narrow limits

forbid our modern Augustuses to convert narrow alleys and ten-story houses into spacious squares and gardened villas. St. Petersburg never had nor needed walls. The batteries of Cronstadt and the shallow mouths of the Neva are the best bulwarks in the world. So long as these remain, there will be no need of walls to keep this city from going on increasing, till the very waters which now constitute its best defence from the foe, shall at last sweep over it in scorn.

The Russian capital has filled the nations with wonder by its sudden rise : is it to fill them with greater wonder by its yet more sudden fall ? Shall the proud monarch of the north hear it said of his darling seat, as was said to the repining prophet of the gourd which had made him so “ exceeding glad,” — “ It came up in a night, and perished in a night ! ” Such a calamity, if we may believe those who have long resided here, is by no means improbable. Even if spared by the flames, which in Russia soon lay cities low, it is so liable to suffer from inundations, that it may one day be necessary to abandon it altogether.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEVA; AND GENERAL VIEW FROM ISAAC'S BRIDGE.

Attractions of the river—Compared with the Thames—The great bridge—Magnificent prospect—General sketch of the city from this point—The public buildings within view—Divisions of the city—Its progress—The islands—The quays—Want of trees.

IN attempting to give a general idea of St. Petersburg, we would begin with its finest and most distinguishing feature—the Neva—the noblest of city rivers.

Englishmen are proud of the Thames; and with reason. It is a noble river; but will not compare with the Neva. The one flows smooth and voiceless, afraid to disturb the slumbers of the aldermen who are its masters, and keep it in awe: the other rushes swift as the tempest—roars like an untamed savage, fresh from his native deserts, caring neither for citizen nor emperor, who have in vain tried to subdue him. The spirit of old Father Thames is broken by the insults we have heaped upon him; ugly black lines of mud defile his shores; we turn the ends and backs of our houses to him, as if he were not worth looking at, and set down such buttresses of masonry to support the bridges across him, that he cannot move them even in his fury. Instead of displaying banners along his banks, and doing all we can to make him sensible of his importance and our gratitude, we affront him in the most atrocious manner; hanging out

dyers' poles and washerwomen's ropes, with old linen, flannel petticoats, and other unutterable tatterdemalion things, fluttering so insultingly in the breeze, that the poor river skulks along in shame, glad to hide his head among the brewers' vats of Southwark, or underground in Mr. Brunel's tunnel—any where to be out of sight.

But the Neva asserts his privileges, and is honoured with becoming respect. The emperor himself rears his beautiful palace on his banks, unfurls his proudest banner in his honour, and does all he can to coax him into good humour; bringing sweet flowers to please him with their perfume, spreading trees to shade him from the sun, and costly statues to adorn his path. Nor are the citizens ashamed to come and look at him, but have built strong walls along his banks, as costly as palaces, supporting broad avenues, corresponding to his own majesty, and long lines of splendid mansions, from whose windows it is the pride of the richest and the fairest to look on his ample tide; while, instead of insulting him, by blocking up his bed with pillars that cannot be shaken, they every autumn clear the way for him by removing the bridges which, in his vernal joy, he would take very good care to remove for himself. In return for this courtesy of theirs, he lays himself calmly down to rest when winter comes, and allows his children to dance and sing, and play upon his breast, throughout the long slumber that will again give him vigour to bring them bread and wealth—gold and rich argosies—in summer.

The Neva enters the sea by many branches, along all of which portions of this great capital or of its suburbs are built; but the only one with which we have to do is

the principal one, called the Grand Neva, on which stand the finest parts of the city. The chief point is at the Isaac Bridge, which passes from Isaac Square on the mainland, to the rich and populous quarter built on the Vassilii-ostroff (*Basil's isle*), which, from its size and importance, is termed, pre-eminently, *the Island*. This square, which is adorned with Peter's statue, the admiralty, the cathedral of St. Isaac, the senate-house, &c., and unites with the admiralty square, may be called the heart of St. Petersburg, all the great lines from the remotest extremities centring in it more or less directly.

The bustle and gaiety always seen on the bridge, from the crowds of pedestrians and showy equipages constantly moving on it, or on the quays stretching right and left, make it one of the most attractive stations in the whole city. The bridge itself, built entirely on boats, is not the least curious object. Though fully one thousand and fifty feet long, and about sixty wide, it is entirely of wood—not painted white and handsome, however, like the wooden bridges in other countries, but rough and dark-looking. The roadway is of squared logs, enormously thick; they are left quite naked, without gravel or composition of any kind over them. Though only a bridge of *boats*, it is not so low as that term would lead some to suppose. The huge beams, slanting upwards from twenty boats, or rather pontoons, anchored in the river, are so long that they elevate the roadway nearly to the height of ordinary bridge-paths. Though very strongly moored, the pontoons are kept in their places with great difficulty, owing to the violence of the current, which

occasions a loose rocking motion, perceptible in passing from one joint to another; but the work is secure enough to support any number of the heaviest waggons that could find room upon it, the yielding of the boats being in favour of its strength. The enormous joints can all be floated away separately; each pontoon carrying off its own share of the roadway. Some of them are taken to the side at two o'clock every morning, to let ships pass to the custom-house, where they unload under the eye of the officers; and every year, before the ice forms, they are all removed, because, if left, the floating ice, when summer arrives, would destroy them. All communication between the opposite banks is, of course, interrupted until the ice is fully formed; after which the *whole* river is a bridge, and a fair too; games and festivities of all kinds being carried on upon its bosom throughout the long winter. There is again an anxious interruption when the thaw begins, till the floating ice has cleared away sufficiently to permit the re-establishment of the bridge. These interruptions occasion such a serious break to the intercourse both of trade and of friendship, that it has long been projected to build a stone bridge at this point; but there are difficulties to be surmounted, which, as well as the great expense, have always retarded the execution, and left to the present emperor the glory of adding one beautiful monument more to the many that adorn his capital. It is believed that, when other projects shall allow him leisure, he will build not only a bridge of stone, but also complete the quays which are still unfinished. The great depth of the Neva, in many places said to be at least fifty feet, and the flatness of its

banks, render it difficult to lay a sufficient foundation, either for the pillars of a stone structure, or for the piers of a suspension-bridge.

We have mentioned this bridge so particularly, because it is to it that we would beg the reader to accompany us, as the point best suited for enabling him to form a general idea of St. Petersburg, and of the position of its principal ornaments. Standing with the face up the river, we have, 1st, the *mainland* on the right; 2d, the *Vassilii-Ostroff* on the left; and, 3d, farther up the river, *Trinity Island* separated from the *Vassilii* by a very wide arm of the stream. On the third division stands what is called the *Old city*: it was the part first built by Peter; and here his cottage, already mentioned, still remains. It has become the most desolate-looking portion of the whole. It is now united to the mainland by the enormous moveable bridge of *Troitskoï*, which is 2456 feet long. At first, however, all building was confined to the two islands. No one thought of taking up his quarters on *terra firma* till 1705, two years after the first foundations of old St. Petersburg were laid; but the example being once given, the buildings increased so rapidly, that the quarter on the mainland soon became, and is still, by far the largest and most splendid of the capital.

Having thus explained the general position of the three principal divisions of the city, we may next mention some of their particular ornaments. Such a view as now lies around us can seldom be equalled. Nearly all the finest objects of the capital are within sight. On either hand are the magnificent quays, adorned by long lines of buildings, rivalling the finest in Europe; the public

structures mingling harmoniously with, but scarcely outshining, those of the rich private citizens. The Vassilii quay, stretching only a short way up the river, but extending for miles down toward the sea, is adorned with the Academy of Arts, the Mining College, the College of Cadets, &c., all handsome, with lines of streets behind them, penetrating far away to the other side of the island. Up the river, and round the Strelka (battery) point, are the Academy of Sciences, the Exchange, the Custom-house, the Rostral Columns, with dense masses of shipping in front. In old St. Petersburg are seen the imposing citadel, containing the cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, surmounted by a lofty gilded spire. Behind this, among the mazy branches of the river, lie numerous other islands, *Petrofski*, *Krestofski* (*isle of the Cross*), *Ielaghine*, *Kammenoi* (*Stone island*), and *Apothecaries Island*, with its botanic garden, and nearly 4000 feet of glass-houses: but these are all out of sight from the point where we now stand. The whole of the islands of St. Petersburg are of considerable size; not little rocks like those of Stockholm, but wide flats covering many acres—in one instance several miles. What a contrast they present to the romantic islets of the Mälar!

Crossing the river to the right, the eye rests on the most splendid part of all—the fair line of royal dwellings already mentioned, beginning in the distance with the Marble, and ending with the Winter Palace, where the splendid buildings of the Admiralty begin; all of which together present to the view a full mile of the most beautiful architecture in the world, scarcely broken the

whole way, from the admired railing of the Summer-garden down to the end of the bridge, where, as already stated, stands the Isaac square, encircled by so many ornaments. From this square the eye, travelling *down* the stream, takes in the whole of the English quay, composed of a line of most elegant houses, occupied by the principal nobility, the English merchants, the great bankers, the club-houses, the English factory, &c., with storehouses and other government structures innumerable, in the distant outskirts about the mouth of the river.

This is but a mere outline, a most meagre sketch of some of the objects seen from the bridge. As yet we have mentioned only those on the river; but far off, also, wherever the eye may wander, especially towards our right, where the city, with its long streets, spreads backward for miles, objects of magnificence and beauty are seen. The number of gleaming domes, many pealing forth their sweetest tones, rising over miles of land and island, is countless. The great part of the shipping, we have said, is out of sight, round the Vassilii point: here are only the arrivals of the day, waiting by the bridge till the hour of opening.

No large vessels being ever allowed to discharge their cargoes on the principal quays, they are always free from confusion, and the margins of the river are thus not so much encumbered with shipping as to diminish its noble breadth. Barges, piled high with charcoal, or other kinds of fuel—huge vessels with stones for some public building—long clumsy structures, with open sides, for fishmongers and washerwomen—compose the floating

tenantry of the river's edge ; but, numerous though they may be, they form but a slender line on each side, compared with the ample stream. Its bosom, however, is continually enlivened by numerous pleasure-boats, gaudily adorned, shooting in every direction, some hastening up from the bay, some from the large building-yards, where ships are seen in progress at various stations along the river, and some conveying gay parties to visit their friends on the opposite bank. The great bridges being too far apart to suffice for the intercourse of such a large population, crowds of trim ferry-boats are constantly plying at different points.

Beautiful as the view which we have been enjoying on the grand Neva certainly is, it has one great defect—want of trees. Some are seen, but not nearly enough. A line of foliage along the quays would be an immense improvement to them, and most welcome to the eye. The houses now look too harsh—too cold. Miles of stone and window-glass fatigue, even when the architectural combinations are faultless. The Chiaja, at Naples, is one of the most beautiful lines of building in Europe ; but without the fresh verdure of the Villa Reale running parallel to it, it would be insupportable. To drive along it, day after day, without some relief, would burn the eyes from their sockets. What then must be the effect of the verdureless splendours of St. Petersburg ?

CHAPTER VIII.

GLANCE AT THE MONUMENTS, CHURCHES, AND STATISTICS OF ST. PETERSBURG.

ALEXANDER'S COLUMN, the finest monument in the world—Singular anecdote of Russian obedience—Equestrian statue of Peter the Great—Passion of the Russians for monuments of this kind—Russian churches—General description—Feelings excited by their splendour—Trophies from the French and Turks preserved in them—Too much gilding—Pictures—Reverence for them—New cathedral of St. Isaac—Convent of St. Alexander Nefsky—Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul—Tombs of Peter and the Tzars—Cathedral of our Lady of Kasan—Foreign churches—Other public buildings—Size and population—Manufactures—Exports and Imports—Great manufactory at Alexandrofsky—General Wilson—Porcelain and glass manufactories.

TURNING away from our bridge, let us now survey some other portions of this fair city.

There are few squares in St. Petersburg; where all the streets are wide and airy, they are less wanted than among the narrow alleys of other capitals. It contains, however, many *open spaces*, surrounded with fine buildings; but they scarcely correspond with the usual ideas of a *place*. The most beautiful of these is that which divides the Winter Palace, &c. from the Nefskoï quarter. It is adorned with what we do not hesitate to pronounce the finest monument in the world.

In no part of Europe have we seen anything worthy of being compared with the remarkable pillar lately erected here, in honour of the Emperor Alexander. If

we admire Napoleon's column in Paris, or the Melville column in Edinburgh, composed of separate stones put together in the usual way, what shall we say of this stupendous work which consists of only *one* stone, and yet is considerably larger than those monuments? its height, if we are correctly informed, including the figure on the top, being exactly 154 feet, and its diameter 15 feet.* It is a round column, of mottled red granite, from the quarries of Pytterlax, in Finland, 140 miles from St. Petersburg. The stone is very like the beautiful granite of Peterhead, in Scotland, but darker, and susceptible of even a higher polish.

We have never seen anything that attracted us so much. It is the perfection of monumental architecture. There is no frippery; there is something sublime in its simplicity. It is impossible to gaze on it without emotion. You never think of asking to whom it is raised: it has an interest quite distinct from any association with him whose memory it honours. You view it merely as a triumph of human power, which could tear such a mass from the reluctant rock, transport it so great a distance, and, under so many difficulties, carve, and mould, and polish it into one smooth shaft, then poise the huge weight as lightly as a feather, and plant it here, to be the admiration of ages.

* In some accounts, the height is given as only 150 feet. The Paris column is 140 feet high; the Edinburgh one is 136 feet 4 inches high, or, including the figure, 152 feet, with a diameter of 12 feet 2 inches at the base, and 10 feet 6 inches at top; while Trajan's column at Rome, on which it is modelled, is 113 feet 9 inches high. Antonine's column was 172½ feet in height, and 12 feet 3 inches in diameter. The Monument in London is the highest of all, being 202 feet from the pavement; the diameter is 15 feet.

This pillar is founded on massive blocks of granite, and has a pedestal and capital of bronze, made from the cannon taken in the recent wars with the Turks. It is the *largest stone ever cut either in ancient or modern times*. The shaft alone is eighty-four feet high. On its top stands a bronze statue of Religion, in the act of blessing the surrounding city. The head of this figure stoops so ungracefully below the higher part of the half-expanded wings, that, in some positions, it looks a headless trunk. The usual practice of placing on the top the statue of the hero to whom the monument is dedicated has been here departed from, out of deference to a word uttered by Alexander, when passing the column of the Place Vendôme, before the now-restored statue of Napoleon had been removed from its giddy eminence. "God forbid," said he, "that ever *I* should occupy such a post! There is something of profanity in thus exalting any human being, to be worshipped, as it were, by his fellow-creatures."

This unrivalled monument is a remarkable proof of the bold and original taste of the present emperor; for the idea of it began solely with him. But if it excite our admiration so strongly, even as it now is, what would have been thought of it had it been raised here of the full height in which it was cut from the quarry? The history is enough to drive one mad; and it did very nearly drive the emperor that length. Orders had been given to the director of the quarries to try and extract one solid mass, fit to be hewn into a column of a certain length. The operation was begun with slight hopes of success. It was deemed impossible ever to obtain *one*

stone of such a size. Ministers, generals, princes, the whole court, were in anxiety about what the mountain should bring forth; when, at last,—who shall describe their joy?—a courier arrives with the happy tidings that, for once, the labours of the mountain had not ended in disappointment. Expectation was even surpassed; for, in place of eighty-four feet, a mass had been separated nearly one hundred feet long. There were no bounds to the delight inspired by the news. St. Petersburg would now boast of a monument that might challenge the world. But, alas! there was a postscript to this famous letter. The director had been ordered to get a stone eighty-four feet long; and as in Russia they are not in the habit of giving a man much credit for departing from the very letter of an imperial mandate—and it being a bad precedent to allow any functionary to think for himself—the zealous man of stones added, that he was now *busy sawing away the superfluous fourteen feet*. Here was a pleasant piece of implicit obedience! The emperor was in despair; but as it is not his custom to commission others to do things which may be better done by himself, he posted away immediately, in hopes of still saving his unexpected treasure; and, as good luck would have it, arrived just in time—to see the fair fragment tumble off.

The expense of this monument was very great. To say nothing of the cost of transport, one hundred men laboured on it for some years after its arrival. Not the least expensive part was the raising of it, when finished, into its present position. As a specimen of the great skill which the Russians have acquired in applying mecha-

nical powers, it is worth mentioning that it was swung into its place in the short space of fifty-four minutes. The whole population of the capital were present (August, 1832) to see the ceremony. M. de Montferrand, the architect, is a native of France, but must have had some lessons in mechanics from his adopted countrymen; for in Paris, the other day, they took several hours to raise the poor little obelisk of Luxor, which would not make a little finger to this Russian giant.

In honouring his predecessor with a monument of this description, the emperor may have been prompted by a wish to excel the boasted feat of the empress Catherine, who selected for the base of the *Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great*, a large mass of grayish rock, lying in the middle of marshes, at such a distance from St. Petersburg that every one believed it impossible to transport it thither. In its native bed it was sunk fifteen feet in the ground; on being raised from which, before reaching the sea, it had a journey of nearly six miles to make, by a road ingeniously constructed for the occasion; after which it had a voyage of eight miles to the spot which it now occupies. Two small pieces are joined to the largest block, which weighs upwards of fifteen hundred tons. It is a rough irregular mass, forty-three feet long, twenty-one broad, and thirteen high in front, from which it slopes gradually backwards. The inscription is beautifully simple: *Petro primo Catharina secunda, 1782*. Peter is seen riding gallantly up this rock, in the ancient costume of Muscovy,—which, with a short mantle flowing from his shoulders, has a very classical effect. He is without stirrups, and is so busy getting his steed to

trample on the hydra of rebellion writhing beneath his feet; that he does not perceive the brink of the precipice till he is about to be plunged over it. Ever calm and fearless in peril, he checks his horse as if by a wish, and pauses with the greatest self-possession, to beckon into existence the proud city which was to bear his name. The effect of the whole monument is certainly good; but the marvels of the *rock* it stands upon have been too much trumpeted: one is disappointed to find that it is merely a good-sized block, scarcely higher than the pedestal of our own Charles at Charing-cross. It is said to have sunk considerably of late.

Men are always most eager about what is most difficult to be obtained. The Russians have a passion for these mountains of granite, probably because there is not a stone bigger than a molehill within sight of their capital. If common materials could be procured at little expense, they would *build* monuments like other people; but since stones may not be had for thousands, they must transport whole rocks at the expense of tens of thousands. In Norway and Sweden, which are strewn as thick with rocks as other countries are with furze-bushes, they build everything of wood.

A foreigner is more struck by the strength and durability of the two monuments now described, on looking at the crumbling plaster-work of the city in which they stand. Could we suppose St. Petersburg deserted by its inhabitants, and left without a repairing hand only for a single century, how much of it would remain standing? The handful of bronze and adamant of its founder's monument, Alexander's column, the granite embank-

ments of the Neva, and a few pillars in some of the churches, rearing their heads among indistinguishable heaps of decay, would probably be all that would survive to tell that here *was* a city.

The churches, though not in general composed of such imperishable materials as the monuments just mentioned, are well worthy of notice. They are so numerous, however, that any other than a mere allusion, and that only to a few of them, would be impossible in a work of this nature. If the *taste* displayed in them be often questionable, their *splendour* none will deny. The first entrance of a foreigner into a Russian church is a moment of complete surprise. As soon as the threshold is crossed, the vast space enclosed by lofty roof and long aisle is one blaze of light, which is thrown back with new lustre from the pure marble below. There is nothing to break the fine proportion of the architecture—neither chair nor bench of any kind. The eye wanders in rapture, from pavement to keystone, without a single object to mar the effect, except, perhaps, some lonely worshipper kneeling by the foot of a pillar, which only appears larger from having something to measure it by. In fine, the cleanness, the glitter, the lavishness of ornament, are beyond all that can be seen in other northern countries. Almost every one of the principal temples here must have cost more than all the churches of Berlin put together.

Externally, the style is more Oriental than European. The great number of domes and cupolas on these vast structures would qualify them for being at once turned into Turkish mosques. Millions must have been ex-

pendent on the *outside* gilding of the domes of St. Petersburg. 2814 gold ducats were spread over the iron of a single spire—that of the cathedral of the fortress; and others are said to have cost still more. Some of the domes, instead of being wholly gilt, are painted deep blue, with large stars spangled over them, shining with beautiful effect in the sun. The severity of the climate, however, soon injures the external ornaments, and puts gold-leaf and tin, as well as paint and lime, in frequent request. Indeed, every building in the city is constantly needing repair. We found many of the theatres and museums, as well as the churches, shut up because the workmen were in them. This is owing to the frailty of the materials employed. Most of the public buildings, as well as the new houses, are put down in the statistical returns as built of *stone*; but this often means *brick covered with stucco*, which is hourly peeling off. The great palaces, which look so imposing, are as flimsy as all the rest of the city.

But while the outside of the churches is thus unsubstantial, their interior is generally adorned in the most solid manner. Granite columns, polished to the highest degree, rise glittering from marble pavements, of every varied colour that the quarry has produced. Where the wall is not coated with marble, expensive gilding takes its place; and often large portions of scripture are written in the intervals. In some instances, the whole of one of the gospels is thus painted on the wall, in large and beautiful letters.

The way in which the internal columns and aisles of churches are sometimes adorned, is singular enough.

In one are grouped the trophies earned in the wars with the Turks, from the capture of Ismail to the fall of Varna. Here banners and horsetails festoon the walls, intermixed with the keys of important fortresses, scimitars, and Oriental armour; while, bright through all, gleams the humbled crescent. In other churches hang banners taken from the Austrians, Prussians, and French; among which last, the mace of a marshal of the empire—of Ney, we believe—is carefully displayed.

Every church contains some pictures. *Outside* even—but this is more the case in country places—large groups of figures, mere daubs, may be seen on the plaster above the portico. Of the pictures *within*, among all the churches we examined in St. Petersburg, there is hardly one of any merit. The only performances of this kind which are at all tolerable, so far as our experience goes, are some copies from Reubens, Guido, and Perugino. The most revered pictures, generally of the Saviour, the Virgin, or some saint, are always placed not far from the door—sometimes on a table, sometimes on the wall—framed in a most vulgar, gaudy fashion, a character which belongs to too much of what is seen among the ornaments of Russian churches. The drapery on these pictures is formed by a thin sheet of gold and silver tinsel, leaving nothing exposed of the original picture but the face, which thus has a most ludicrous effect; looking like a child peeping through a hole in a piece of tin. The veneration in which they are held by the people, however, is extreme. The toe of the black statue of St. Peter at Rome, well burnished though it be with the kisses of the faithful, is not saluted

with half the fervour displayed by the Russians in this picture-worship. If the surface of the painting were left exposed, every trace of it would be soon kissed away. Each person on entering presses his lips as close to the face as the tinsel and frame will allow; then, kneeling, and making the sign of the cross, utters some vow or ejaculation, before advancing to the place where the officiating priests are stationed,—which is usually at the *side*, not at the *end* of an aisle.*

The cathedral which would best merit a full description is that of St. Isaac, the protector of the empire. As yet, however, it is only in progress towards splendour. When completed, it is expected to rival St. Peter's at Rome. The sums already expended on it are enormous. In every successive reign, since 1768, something has been done to it; but the foundations having been at first insecure, the work of each emperor has been more to repair the blunders of his predecessor than to add to the splendour of the structure. Wearied of this endless waste, the present emperor has very wisely thrown down nearly all that was done before him, and is now raising it on a plan of great magnificence and solidity. If spared so long, he is determined to complete in ten years what had baffled all his predecessors; and, for this purpose, he has decreed that so much shall be expended on it every year. What renders this structure so expensive is, that while other buildings have but one front, this has four, its form being a perfect square. The walls are of beautiful white marble; each peristyle is formed of twelve columns of polished red granite, each

* See chap. xi. of this volume, and chap. viii. of the second.

of one solid stone, sixty feet in height and seven in diameter. According to the fashion which seems so common here, every pillar rests on a socket of bronze, and terminates in a Corinthian capital of the same. High above these, where the dome springs, is a circle of similar columns, also of large proportions. The operation of transporting these huge stones from the river across the square is a very curious sight; the beams on which they are rolled are bruised to threads by the weight. Nothing but marble, or the equally expensive granite brought from Finland, are to be employed in this immense building. The whiteness of the marble on the walls throws out the dark columns beautifully. The architect is a Frenchman, the same who was intrusted with Alexander's pillar. He has five thousand labourers engaged on this great task. The scaffolding is of strength sufficient to make one believe it is intended to be as durable as the building itself.

The same solidity is visible in the preparations connected with all the public works here. The framework employed in swinging Alexander's pillar into its place is said to have been *ten times too strong*—an error on the right side. This peculiarity is worth mentioning, as a proof that the Russians are not so careless of human life as has been represented.

There are many churches of great beauty, but we can do little more than name them. That called *Alexandronefskaïa svaitotroitzkaïa lavra*, or Convent of St. Alexander Nefskoï, situated at the end of the Perspective of the same name, nearly three miles from the Admiralty, contains the tombs of some princes of the royal

family, those of many eminent generals or statesmen, and especially that of the saint, who has a sarcophagus consisting of 3250 pounds weight of silver.

The *Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul*, the oldest place of worship in the capital, protects the remains of nearly all the emperors and empresses since the time of Peter, who himself sleeps here, with Tzars, Tzarinas, Tzarevitches (*sons* of Tzars), and Tzarovnas (*daughters* of Tzars), in long and pompous array beside him.

The *Cathedral of our Lady of Kasan* would also merit a long description. Its dome bears some resemblance to that of the Pantheon at Rome, and the noble converging sweep of 132 pillars, forming the arcade in front, is imitated from the colonnade of St. Peter's. The interior is adorned with fifty-four beautiful pillars of grayish granite, each but a single stone, the shaft resting on finely-wrought pedestals of bronze, and terminating in wreathed summits of the same rich material. The picture of the Virgin here displayed is looked on with such reverence, that pearls and jewels to the value of 100,000 roubles (4000*l.*) have been employed to adorn it. Generals departing on distant campaigns come here in solemn procession, at which the whole court and capital attend, to kiss the sacred image, and to invoke its blessing on their enterprize.

The churches of our *Lady of Vladimir*, *St. Nicolas*, and that of the *Raskolniks*, &c., the church of the Armenians (of whom there is a numerous body), and the temple of the French Catholics in the Nefskoï, where the remains of Moreau, transported from the fatal heights of Dresden, find the repose which his country denied

him—are among the more remarkable of the many religious edifices which we must leave undescribed. There are in all 140 churches of the establishment, besides the two large convents and their chapels. The foreign churches are also numerous, and include 9 Lutheran, 3 Calvinist, and 2 Roman Catholic places of worship.

Among the public edifices of a general nature, those which would most merit description are the *Exchange*, the *Academy of Fine Arts*, the *Mining College* (*Gornoi Korpous*), the *Admiralty*, the *Foundling*, the *Poor's Hospital*, *City Infirmary*, the *Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb*, the *Blind*, &c., the *Imperial Library*, the new *Alexander Theatre* near it, the *Grand Theatre*, &c.; but all of these, as well as *Souvaroff's Statue*, near the *Champ de Mars*, and *Roumantsoff's* modest pillar on the square of the *Vassilii-ostroff*, we must leave undescribed, with the frank confession that we have no hope of inducing the reader to accompany us through all the curiosities of a city which, with its suburbs and islands, covers a wearisome circle 22 English miles ($33\frac{1}{2}$ versts) in circumference.

Nor has St. Petersburg yet reached its full growth: the statistical tables, collected by the indefatigable Schnitzler, prove that it is rapidly increasing in size and population. In 1762 there were only 4554 houses, of which not more than 460 were of stone; whereas, in 1832, there were 8157, of which 2915 were of stone. It will give a more clear idea of its progress, however, to state the amount of population at three different periods.* In the year

* The statements in this and the three following pages are given on the authority of official documents quoted in SCHNITZLER'S *La Russie, la*

1750 it contained only 74,273 souls, but in 1828 the population had reached 422,165, while in 1832 it was given at 449,343. The following table will show how the population is composed:—

Clergy	2,188								
Nobility	34,079								
Non-commissioned officers and soldiers	39,437								
Merchants	<table> <tr> <td>Nobles</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Domiciled in St. Petersburg</td><td>8,506</td></tr> <tr> <td>———— in other towns ..</td><td>2,297</td></tr> <tr> <td>Foreign merchants</td><td>30</td></tr> </table>	Nobles	25	Domiciled in St. Petersburg	8,506	———— in other towns ..	2,297	Foreign merchants	30
Nobles	25								
Domiciled in St. Petersburg	8,506								
———— in other towns ..	2,297								
Foreign merchants	30								
Artisans, inscribed in the different crafts	4,617								
———— temporary ...	<table> <tr> <td>Russians</td><td>21,526</td></tr> <tr> <td>Foreigners</td><td>1,136</td></tr> </table>	Russians	21,526	Foreigners	1,136				
Russians	21,526								
Foreigners	1,136								
Citizens	<table> <tr> <td>Domiciled at St. Petersburg</td><td>24,653</td></tr> <tr> <td>Belonging to other places ..</td><td>12,072</td></tr> </table>	Domiciled at St. Petersburg	24,653	Belonging to other places ..	12,072				
Domiciled at St. Petersburg	24,653								
Belonging to other places ..	12,072								
Raznotchintsi (people of various professions)	66,366								
Foreigners, not merchants	7,199								
Servants of the nobility	94,009								
Peasants (shopkeepers, hawkers, hackney-coachmen, &c.)	127,865								
Inhabitants of the village of Okhta	3,338								
	<hr/>								
	449,343								
	<hr/>								

To give an idea of the arrivals and departures from the capital it may be stated, that in the same year, 37,222 Russians *entered* it, while 3695 *left* it: of foreigners 5027 arrived, and 9697 left.

A knowledge of the *commerce* of the Russian capital is of such importance to all who would form any correct opinion of the wants and resources of the empire, that no *Pologne, et la Finlande*, Paris and St. Petersburg, 1835, 1 vol. 8vo.—a work of immense value to all who wish to become acquainted with the statistics of Russia.

apology is necessary for inserting the following tables, showing the imports and exports in the years 1831 and 1832. Ship-captains say of St. Petersburg, that it is the most *liberal port in the world*, there being no charges on *ships* in any shape whatever, beyond the dues on their cargoes. It may be premised that the capital enjoys precisely one-half of the whole foreign trade of Russia, leaving only an eighth to Riga, and the twelfth to Odessa. Of the trade of Russia in general, it also deserves to be mentioned that it is in the most flourishing state. Archangel, which was long the only seaport of the empire, now makes but a poor figure beside its younger rivals: yet even its trade is still of great importance, and is rising higher every year; the exports, which in 1829 amounted to 562,000*l.*; having in 1831 reached 590,057*l.*; since which they have been gradually advancing in a still greater proportion.

IMPORTS OF ST. PETERSBURG.

	1831.	1832.
	Roubles.	Roubles.
Gold and silver		16,000,000
Spun cotton (twist and yarn)	82,160,700	40,000,000
Cotton goods	3,609,612	3,400,000
Woollens	6,261,794	8,000,000
Linen goods.. ..	364,883	500,000
Silks	3,637,188	5,700,000
Coffee	2,507,814	4,500,000
Raw sugar	20,290,639	25,500,000
Wines	8,335,269	7,000,000
Liqueurs		863,000
Medical drugs		1,400,000
Tobacco	1,965,917	
Fruits	1,813,698	
Cheese	862,609	

EXPORTS.

	1831.	1832.
	Roubles.	Roubles.
Grain	12,956,600	5,000,000
Iron	3,892,330	7,500,000
Copper .....	.....	5,500,000
Hemp.....	2,377,544	15,000,000
Flax	2,520,926	4,000,000
Linseed oil.....	1,249,146	
Timber articles	2,377,544	
Tallow	35,181,270	37,650,000
Linen stuffs	6,215,175	6,800,000
Towelling	2,90,000	
Tobacco.....	331,000	
Dressed hides.....	138,218	
<i>Ioufles</i> and raw hides	3,453,637	3,610,000
Cordage.....	.....	1,000,000
Potash.....	.....	2,500,000

As Schnitzler's phrase, "*marchandises en bois*," is not very intelligible, it may be more instructive to state, that the wood exported from all parts of Russia in 1833, was valued at *seven* millions of roubles, and the quantity for 1835, at *nine* millions. The fur trade is of great importance to Russia: the total exports in 1834 were valued at 168,378*l.*, of which 55,357*l.* were to England alone. In 1827, furs to the value of 493,440*l.* were sold to the different countries of Europe.

To show what progress Russia is making in manufactures, it may be stated that there are no fewer than one hundred and eighty-seven manufactories of various kinds in or near the capital. Many of these are worthy of especial notice, but we can mention only the celebrated and interesting Alexandrofsky Zavod, which stands about six miles from the city. This is one of the largest

manufacturing establishments to be met with on the continent, there being about 3000 free labourers employed in it, and 1000 boys and girls from the Foundling Hospital. There is also a house of convalescence for patients from the Foundling, and a hospital for the sick of the place. Cotton, linen, table-cloths, quilts, sail-cloth, and playing cards, are here manufactured on a very extensive scale, the men being employed in the hemp and flax departments, and the children on the cotton and linen. There is also a very extensive fabric of weaving and spinning machinery, steam-engines, &c.; but we were given to understand that (as we have usually found regarding such establishments abroad) the emperor can procure steam-engines, and all kinds of machinery, much cheaper from England than he can make them at home. The superintendents are from England; and the whole of the works are under the management of a gentleman of the name of Wilson, who, according to the Russian fashion of giving military titles to those who never wielded any weapon more bloody than the pen or the pestle, enjoys the rank of General, and is honoured with much regard by the government.

Though comparatively little has been doing in them of late years, a visit to the porcelain works will also reward the stranger. We have seen some vases which were made here, as large and as beautiful as any of the famous Dresden manufactory. The painting, in particular, is most exquisitely finished.

The glass works of St. Petersburg have long been celebrated. Some of the largest mirrors in Europe have been made here, and the labours are still carried on with great spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENES AMONG THE PEOPLE—BEARDS, DRESS, AND MANNERS,

Singular appearance of the Russian crowd—Unlike every other European nation—Oriental character—Plainness of the women—Smallpox—The men—Intermarriages with Germans, &c.—Long beards esteemed by the people—Want of cleanliness—Washing process—Sheep-skins—Clean shirts—General costume—Not always suited to the climate—Inconsistency of the Russians—Heated rooms—Cold—Sobriety—Drunkenness in the streets—The Russian peasant contrasted with the Frenchman—The Englishman—The dram-shop—Natural gaiety.

LEAVING dead monuments and dry statistics, let us glance at the more interesting—the *living* sights around.

Most of the streets are silent and deserted; scarce a creature is to be seen. The houses are known to be occupied, else we should say that the city is much too large for its population. On the bridge, however, and in the principal thoroughfares near it, there is a constant and highly interesting crowd. The appearance of the people is most strange—different from that of all other nations. In the other countries of Europe, a traveller, passing from state to state, can note the differences between the two; here it is unnecessary to do so, further than by the brief sentence, “*everything* is different.” Dress, features, manners, pursuits—all are new. The Swedes, the Norwegians, the Danes, are like some of the other nations of the continent; but the Russian is *unique*—alone among the tribes of men. He

is neither Asiatic nor European, partly of the one, perhaps, and partly of the other, but he partakes of the character of neither so strongly as to entitle us to pronounce decidedly on his parentage. Let his origin have been what it may, he now stands apart from all. The only comparison that can be made about him is, to say that he is like—a Russian.

The first impression, however, of a stranger in a Russian crowd is, that he must be in some city of Asia,—so truly Oriental is the air of many; but the strength and freshness of every structure around soon recall him from dreams of the decaying east. At another time the long beards, and flowing robes, and coloured girdles make them look a population of Jews; but their hair and eye want the deep dark hue of the tribe of Israel.

The great mass of the people wear the coarse sheep-skin dress already mentioned; and, filthy and rude as it is, it sets off their good forms to advantage; for, however bad their features may be, they are a tall, well-built race as to figure. The *men* at least are so; of the *women* few are gifted with handsomeness, either of face or person. There is no country in Europe where the females of the lower classes are so universally forbidding, their features and forms being equally bad. If you meet a person at all worth looking at, she is sure to be a German, or perhaps a Swede. Heavy wrinkled cheeks, and short blunt noses, are the prevailing style of beauty. The gait, too, is exceedingly ungraceful, their step being as short and uneasy as that of stumping Chinese damsels. In fact, among Russian women of the middle and lower class, we did not see a single face that would be danger-

ous to an Englishman. Their pernicious baths, and early marriages, have been blamed for this dearth of female charms; but they also suffer greatly from another ravager of beauty, long deemed incapable of control—smallpox. Nowhere have we seen so many marked with the traces of this sad malady. Whether it be from ignorance or from some religious scruple, we know not, but they have always shown themselves averse to vaccination: out of 9779 infants born here in 1828, only 543 were vaccinated.

Nor is it the females alone that are chargeable with the grievous offence of plain looks; fine features are equally rare among the men. The imperial family are the only really good-looking people in Russia. Both the emperor and his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, have faces that would pass for handsome anywhere; but they are more Germans than Russians. The true Russian may be known in any part of the world, by his small light eyes; a certain lowness of the nose, the end of which is thrust back so as to show the nostril too much; and especially by the general flatness of the cheek, and total want of expression in the countenance. A more unmeaning face, even when there is anything like handsomeness, cannot be met with.

Should the reader ever happen to see a good-looking Russian, an exception to the tempting standard now given, he may safely set him down as of the higher ranks—in fact, not a pure Russ, of whom alone we are now speaking;—for many of the best families have intermarried with those of Livonia or Courland—countries famed for the beauty and amiability of their

women. Russian officers always look well, whether taken individually or together; but all of them belong to the class now named, and have the further advantage of being well dressed: unlike some of the German ones, the Russian uniforms set off a good figure and improve a bad one.

Of Circassian blood there is little among the Russians. We have heard Germans speak of some of that graceful tribe, as adorning the gay societies of St. Petersburg; but it must have been in dreams that they were seen. The maids of Daghestan still bloom among their native rocks, in spite of Russian power and Russian gold. The Russians call themselves masters of Circassia and its mountains, but they have never been able to win the affections of even the meanest of the people. Though the traffic in beauty be now strictly prohibited by treaties, a Circassian mother, even at every risk, would sell her child to a Turkish soldier, rather than *marry* her to a Muscovite count.

Historians say so much about Peter's firmness in extirpating the long beards in which his people delighted,—with his own imperial hand cutting off, not the beards merely, but the heads of the refractory,—that we expected to find the chins of the Russians as naked as those of barbers' blocks. But there are national prejudices too strong even for the most unshrinking reformers. The Russian loves his beard with no common love, and there it still flows in ample waves to his girdle, defying alike the beheading-sword and the razor. The peasant would sooner part with his purse than his beard: it is his pride, his birthright. Better abandon children and

home to wander into forlorn exile, than give up the only thing left him to glory in. Liberty is not worth contending for, but a beard is. Liberty is but a *word*, an untangible fanciful thing, which no man ever saw or could make money of: a beard is a reality; something which a man can not only see, but handle also. And if he cannot exactly make money by a beard, it gains him that which is better than gold, for he knows that no true Russian maid would look at him, if shorn of this beautiful appendage. Without his beard he would neither have affection from others, nor respect from himself. A beard is graceful, imposing, venerable—in one word, it is *Russian*.

The usage still continues, therefore, let the emperor thunder against it¹ as he may. He can shear his soldiers, his sailors, his ministers, his nobles, his foreigners, his brothers, his princes—for these live by his breath, and must do as he bids them. But his subjects—those who support *him*, and supply him with the means of paying all these creatures of his will,—every man that is obscure enough to be independent,—persists in displaying this, the only badge he has to show that he is still a Muscovite. Even the clergy refuse to be cropped; they are the most obstinate of all the hairy flock. The government is right to let the matter rest. Violent changes in manners—the *compelled* adoption of any prescribed reform—have never done good in any country. Cutting off his beard does not make a civilized man of a savage. Let them humanise the people by indulgent laws and good institutions, and the beards, if they be such an evil, will disappear of themselves.

Whether the long beard be consistent with cleanliness, is a question soon settled in the streets of St. Petersburg. Nothing can be more filthy than the appearance of the people; and it strikes one the more, immediately after leaving the Swedes, Norwegians, or Danes, who are all very cleanly. The nature of their dress powerfully contributes to the disgusting appearance of the native population. Greasy sheep-skins cannot be great promoters of cleanliness. It is a notorious fact also, that the great bulk of the people never allow water to touch the person, except once a week—on Saturday evening, when their religion prescribes a visit to the bath, where they get such a thorough ablution (see chap. xv. *on Baths*), as entitles them to eight days of filthiness. The Russian takes his clean shirt with him on this occasion, and it never leaves his back till Saturday comes round again; for among the lower classes it is not customary to put off *any* part of their dress, even at night—nearly all of them sleep in their clothes.

To wash the *face* on ordinary week-days is a folly unknown; the *hands* may, by a few, be occasionally polluted with water. In the country a small jar of this scarce liquid may be seen hanging by some of the doors, for washing with; at least a thimbleful being allowed, oozing from below, to each person. At some inns and eating-houses, also, a metal cistern, of the smallest dimensions, hangs by the entrance; from which, on pushing up the pin stuck in the bottom, a few *drops* of water trickle, to smear the hands with, before going to dinner. But the practice is scarcely associated in our minds with any idea of cleanliness; the towel hanging near having al-

ready been used by every comer for a week past, and being often as black as if it had been scouring the saucepans.

Instead of the woolly skin, a short frock of red-striped cotton, made much in the same shape, is often worn by shop-lads, errand-boys, butchers' apprentices, &c. Like every dress the Russians wear, it sets off the figure to advantage. But the most common dress of all who have not the axe or the oar in their hand, is the long blue swaddling-coat. Droschky-men, and a great part of the people met with in the streets, are dressed in it. There is a long sash round the middle, generally yellow or red. They seldom wear any thing about the neck; the collar of the coat being very low, and the shirt made without a neck, like that of a woman. The head projects above a long tract of skin, which, from constant exposure to sun and wind, looks as horny as the rhinoceros's hide. We shave our chins; the Russian shaves the *back* of the head. His idea of handsome looks appearing to consist in having his head raised as distinct as possible from the body, he shaves away a large portion of the hair at the top of the neck, and cuts the remainder so as to make the head resemble a turnip, as near as may be. He generally wears a small low-crowned hat, with a broad brim.

If the Russian's dress be scanty above, it is long enough below. It reaches to the ground, and laps closely over the limbs, so that he has a long waving appearance, as he moves through the streets with solemn pace. Instead of *blue* cloth, the variegated cotton-velvet, —one of the most beautiful products of the Russian loom, as yet little known in England,—is sometimes employed

to make the flowing robe ; but on those who come into the streets with it, this article, worn also by the rich for morning-gowns, is always shining with grease.

The dress *below* the coat is often very slight. They wear no flannel ; the only protection to the limbs is a thin rag of striped cotton, made into breeches, which are thrust into the long black boots that complete the costume.

A stranger would say that one-half the people must be starving with cold even in summer, so thin and slight are their garments. Yet there is a singular contradiction in the dress of the other half of the street crowd. Even in the warmest days, when we were scarcely able to walk for the heat, we saw Russians wrapped up as if for winter. While foreigners are glad to fan themselves with their hats, the natives may be seen with huge fur cloaks about them, thick great-coats below, and other articles sufficient to load a giant. This custom arises from the variableness of their climate, of which we ourselves saw some examples. When we first arrived the days were as hot as we ever felt ; but before long the weather was as cold and rainy as in November at home. Even in the course of the *same day*, there are great variations of temperature. At noon it is burning, but ere night almost freezing. Nay, some assert that, out of the sun, it is *always* cold at St. Petersburg. The damps of the river, or the breezes sweeping from Lake Ladogo, penetrate everywhere. On the sunny side of the street you are comfortable, perhaps melting ; but pass to the shade, and you shiver. Such at least was the reason given us by a German, who had been ten years in Russia, for

asserting that of all seasons in the year, summer is the one when people here must be most guarded about their dress.

How the Russian should be able to stand either summer or winter cold was to us most surprising, when we became acquainted with the state in which they keep their rooms. On entering the house of a tradesman, for instance, it is scarcely possible to breathe, so great is the heat. The smell, too, not a breath of air being admitted, is frightful. Yet here they smother themselves winter and summer, never making the least change in the temperature. We cannot suppose it possible for human beings to endure a higher degree of heat. The Russians, in fact, are full of contradictions. In speaking of them, you at one time say that they are so hardy as to go very thinly clad; and then, immediately after, you are forced to bring in that they are so effeminate, that people of other countries can neither carry their loads of summer furs, nor endure the stifling vapours of their summer stoves. Their frames must be differently constituted from ours: they can encounter the most opposite excesses, and the most sudden transitions, without the slightest inconvenience. They load themselves with furs, yet can sleep on the stones without cloak or covering. From rooms where an Englishman would expire with the suffocating warmth, they rush to tumble upon the ice of the Neva. From a bath, heated to an almost insupportable extreme, they plunge themselves among snow.

Nor is it merely in regard to heat and cold that this inconsistency is exhibited: it is visible in all they do.

They are naturally sober and self-denying; can live long without indulging in excess; are most industrious when it is in their power to gain a little, and anxious to store up something against the evil day. Yet, put liquor in their way—let temptation come across their path—and that instant, farewell sobriety, industry, saving habits! all are forgotten, as much as if they had never been known. They are consistent in nothing but their contradictions.

The propensity last mentioned is the worst part of the Russian character. Nothing is more common in the quiet streets (for the sight is seldom witnessed in the more crowded parts) than to meet a pair of blue-coated gentlemen, reeling home in most helpless intoxication. They neither see nor hear you. If they run against the passenger, they think it is the wall that they have struck, and shoulder on without moving eye or lip. They are generally arm in arm, trying to *help* each other—but the effort cannot be continued much longer—they are evidently getting more oblivious. There is neither oath nor angry word betwixt them; they are reeling on in perfect silence and brotherly love. They have still some sense of shame left, and are anxious to get home out of sight: they raise their feet to make longer steps—but it will not do; the foot falls where it rose from; the head is getting giddier, the street wider, the limb feebler, till down they fall in the nearest gutter, snoring in most complete insensibility. A melancholy, but a too frequent sight! If the emperor could eradicate this debasing propensity, he would do more for his people than if he should overrun Asia.

There is something remarkable, too, in the Russian's way of getting drunk. Even in his vices he is unlike other people. Some nations drink for amusement—the Russians drink to get drunk. A Frenchman spends his long holiday at the *barrière*, over a *demi-litre*, and, even if he make it a whole one, walks home very decently at night. He went there to talk, *pour se désennuyer*, to see his friends, or dance a round with his sweetheart. The *wine* was a mere secondary consideration ; a mean, not the end of his amusement. The Englishman goes to the tavern to hear the paper read, to abuse the ministry, and smoke his pipe : he may come away merry, but would be ashamed to hear afterwards that he came away drunk. It was not for the liquor, but for the company and the talk he went thither. Even when a Frenchman or an Englishman does get intoxicated, he has spent hours in reaching that state ; but with a Russian it is quite otherwise—he gets drunk *in a moment*. He enters a brandy-shop, beckons to the master, counts down his kopeeks, seizes the measure, and, at one draught, quaffs enough to make him a beast.

Some nations seek to justify their drinking by the pretext that they do so to make themselves merry—their phlegmatic blood will not move without a stimulant. The Russian drinks to make himself sad. He needs no stimulus to put him into spirits ; he is by nature the merriest soul alive. Frolicsome as a young colt, he may be seen, when two or three have got together on the quays, or on the greensward round the fortress, flinging his heels as high as the trees, playing all manner of fan-

tastic tricks with his companions, and keeping the ring in laughter with his jokes. But the moment this happy creature has swallowed the poisonous dose, he becomes heavy, flat, and powerless. Mirth and strength alike are gone. He must be cared for by the police, or tied in the droschky among his mates.

CHAPTER X.

LOUNGE IN THE FASHIONABLE NEFSKOI—RUSSIAN EQUIPAGES—FOREIGN POPULATION.

Scenes among the lone streets and silent canals—Policemen—The gay quarters—The Nefskoï Prospekht—New kind of pavement—Crowds and carriages—Equipages of the nobility—Russian idea of horses—Bad steeds—Long traces—Bearded coachman—Young postilion—Three-horse droschkies—Foreign quarter—French—Swedes—Italians—English—Few soldiers seen in the crowds—Profusion of medals.

WE have said that the scenes described in the last chapter are to be seen only in the quiet streets; and it should be stated, that the great majority of the streets are of this character. The moment you leave the bridge and its neighbourhood, or the Nefskoï Prospekht, and one or two of its tributaries, all the avenues are as quiet as the glades of a forest. Now and then a stray droschky may be seen, but generally in most of the streets there is room to manœuvre a brigade without disturbing a creature.

The *canals* are also very lonely and silent. These are in the mainland portion of the capital, and lie one behind the other, forming irregular semicircles, from one point of the Neva to another. There are several of them, such as—beginning with the one farthest back—the *Exterior* and *Lingofskii*, the *Fontanka*, *Catherine's Canal*, and the *Moika*; but they do not stand so near each other as to form very conspicuous objects in the

general aspect of the capital. Some of them are covered with fuel-barges and washing-boats. Their masonry, parapets, &c., are very handsome; and the footpath across some of the more frequented canals is laid with rough iron. On some of these bridges, as well as on those of the Neva, a solitary policeman is stationed in a small house, where one watches night and day—quiet creatures the whole tribe of them are, in whitish coats and dark trousers, peeping out at their door, with harmless Lochaber axes in their hands. Having a good eye, and being always on the alert to notice who passes, they are said to be of great use in detecting thieves. Few policemen of any other kind are seen even in the Nefskoï, where the crowd is greatest.

The gay place just named is the boast of the Russian capital. Indeed, the Nefskoï Prospeckht is one of the finest streets we have ever seen. In many respects it surpasses the Corso at Milan, and in some it almost approaches even the Linden-drive at Berlin, which combines so many attractions, that it is perhaps the most beautiful street in Europe. The Nefskoï commences at the square adjoining the Admiralty and the Palace, and runs backward through the city in a straight line, nearly three English miles long, with lofty, handsome houses on each side, and occasionally rows of trees by the footpath. Along it stand some of the finest buildings of the city—such as the cathedral of our Lady of Kasan, and the Imperial Library; some of the theatres and minor palaces may also be reckoned among its splendours, as well as the *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or Bazaar, &c. The gilded spire of the Admiralty forms a conspicuous termination

to this and some other great lines, which radiate from the same point as a centre.

In width and regularity the Nefskoï resembles all the other streets, but not in dulness and monotony. Its broad foot-pavements are incessantly covered with gay parties passing from shop to shop; and the centre, at certain hours, is literally crowded with the showy, but tasteless equipages of the nobility; for it is both the Hyde Park and the Regent-street of St. Petersburg.

The carriage-path is of a kind, of which, except the specimen of it recently exhibited in one of the great thoroughfares in London, we have seen no example in any other European city. It consists of what is now known by the name of block-pavement; to form which, little hexagonal blocks of wood, eight inches thick perhaps, and as many wide, cut across the grain, are imbedded in sand and pitch, and made to fit so closely together, that nothing can be more even than the surface they form. There is no driving in the world half so delightful as to roll along this wooden road, in a well-hung carriage drawn by good horses. The noise of the wheels is as soft and agreeable as the motion, which is quite different from that on any other kind of road. Dr. Johnson's idea of the *summum bonum* would have been heightened tenfold had he been whirled in a postchaise on such a road as this. Here and there a block has started or sunk, but the inequalities are scarcely perceptible, and soon repaired when they come to be so. This pavement was laid down partly as an experiment; and it has answered expectations completely as to comfort and look: but the expense is found to be very great, from the

effects of the frosts and wet in disturbing the pieces, and rendering frequent repairs necessary. It has been said that the emperor wishes to have every street in the capital paved in this way, but we can see no sufficient reason for deranging the present good pavements of the old-fashioned kind.

The equipages seen in this seductive quarter are most singular, and, to an English taste, most amusing. We do not speak of the active little droschkies, gliding along in thousands at every hour of the day, but of the great lumbering equipages of the higher classes, seen only at the fashionable hours. In Russia a man's rank is known by the number of horses he drives. One order of nobility, for instance, can drive two or three horses; but these are persons of very low dignity indeed. Another order can sport four, the one above it six; and so on. A merchant, however rich he may be, cannot go beyond the small number allowed to his guild. The great point therefore is to have number, not quality; and four bad horses are thought much more of than two good ones worth treble the money. If a poor prince were to drive one less than his right, he might be taken for a rich count, which would be disgraceful. The consequence is, that you may often see the most singular mixture of steeds to one carriage—dissimilar in colour, size, paces. One thing, however, there is always sure to be—black straggling traces between the different pairs, shaking most clumsily up and down, and so long, that Ducrow might leap his whole stud across the interval without troubling their noble master to stop.

The coachman intrusted with this sorry squadron

would appear to be selected by the size of his beard; in the same way that in London this functionary is chosen, as the French maintain, by the bulk of his person. He occupies a lofty seat, commanding a view of his whole charge; but the front pair is generally managed by a youth, seated on what we would call the *wrong* side, who has not yet acquired the honours of a beard, but tries to borrow dignity from a round black hat and long flowing blue coat—the most awkward garment possible for sitting on horseback with.

The carriage itself is as uncouth as all the other parts of this untidy display. In fact, with their inclination to imitate everything foreign, it is surprising that the Russian nobility have not long since discarded their unseemly equipages, and adopted our English style, as most other nations are trying to do. *Four* horses abreast, which are often seen, look very well; and we were still better pleased with four abreast and *two in front*.

They have one kind of vehicle which looks extremely smart; a sort of droschky, but very different from the common one; in fact, a cabriolet without the head, on four low wheels, drawn by two, sometimes three, horses abreast, of which the one in the shafts is always kept at a furious trot, while the others are advancing at a gallop. These latter, being trained to bend the head and curve the neck outwards, give a most graceful look to the concern, as they bound along with their long manes floating about them. None but the finest horses are ever seen in this gay vehicle. It is the favourite equipage of the young noblemen and rich officers, and is also much used by the emperor in his flights about the city.

An attempt has been made to imitate it at Berlin, and it is likely to become fashionable in other capitals.

In the distant parts of the Nefskoï the pedestrian crowd consists of Russians, but nearer the palace, and in the openings branching off in that vicinity, the stream is chiefly composed of people from other nations. This is the place, therefore, for saying a few words concerning the *foreigners* in St. Petersburg ; and, first, as the most conspicuous, of the *French*.

From the inscriptions on the sign-boards, all along the Nefskoï, one might almost suppose himself in France, *Marchande des modes, gants de Paris, foulards, bas de soie, chapeaux*, and the names of all the other articles of the toilette, are as frequent as in the Rue de la Paix ; and the *demoiselles de comptoir* acquit themselves with all the grace of the school they were bred in. In every shop of this quarter, either the wife or the husband, not unfrequently both, are from Paris. France also supplies the people of St. Petersburg with dancing-masters, ballet-masters, opera figurantes, and hairdressers beyond number.

Germany, again, supplies hands for the heavier and more laborious kinds of work ; tailors, cabinet-makers, gunsmiths, &c., invariably belong to that nation. In fact, the number of Germans in St. Petersburg is quite surprising, and does not appear to be decreasing. The German goes anywhere for bread ; he has no home. Germany is still the country of his love, his dreams ; but, unlike the Swiss or the Scotch, who also wander in their youth, but only in their youth, the German, if he is comfortable, seldom seeks to revisit his fatherland, even

when he has become independent. Hence it is that the number who speak the German language here is so great. Whole families born in St. Petersburg of German parents speak it more than Russian. From the close alliance with Prussia, since a princess of that country has been empress, the greatest influx of new-comers is from Berlin ; but in former times Dresden sent a large proportion. Without reckoning those employed in the army, or high government offices, there cannot be fewer than 10,000 Germans here. A great many of them, as well as of the French, are employed about the theatres. At one time the number of German officers in the different regiments was immense ; indeed it is to them that Russia owes all her military instruction, from the days of Peter downward.

From the analysis of the population given at the end of a foregoing chapter, it is not possible to ascertain the precise number of foreigners here ; the greater part of them being mixed up with Russians, under the general heads of *merchants* and *artisans* : but, from what we are told, the total number of foreigners must be from fifteen to twenty thousand, all gaining a respectable maintenance by their industry. There is a considerable proportion of *Swedes*, in some handicrafts. Of *Italians* there are also many : a sad change it must be to leave their sunny land for such a climate ! But what will not men do for independence ? They are chiefly employed as architects, painters, and singers. To them, as to foreigners of every nation, government affords every encouragement and protection : in many instances they enjoy privileges not extended to natives ; and this system the emperor must continue, until the Russians can do more for themselves.

Of *English* there is a great number here ; but as they are nearly all engaged in the higher branches of commerce, they seldom form a conspicuous part of the city crowd which has suggested these remarks. An English sign-board is very rarely seen. Our countrymen will therefore, with more propriety, be spoken of under a separate head.

In one respect the crowd of St. Petersburg disappoints us : we hear so much of the emperor's military propensities, that we had expected to find his capital little better than a large camp, where we should meet soldiers at every step, and rub shoulders with generals at every turn. But the number of soldiers seen in the streets is extremely small : we may walk half an hour and not encounter one. Many of the troops, we were aware, had gone to the camp of Tzarkoie-celo ; but the number necessary for the ordinary duties of the garrison had not been diminished. In fact, epaulettes and tight-buttoned coats are much more rare than in Berlin, where the crowd is often more than half made up of military men. We have seen a sentinel near the Brandenburg gate salute twenty times in as many minutes, even when there was no especial occasion for officers being abroad ; but in the most frequented parts of St. Petersburg we passed day after day without seeing a musket moved. In short, though we expected to be tormented both night and day with warlike noises—with din of troops marching and countermarching—we did not once hear the sound of fife and drum all the time we were in the capital. We never saw any large body of military, unless when we went to some place on purpose. Among

the soldiers met in the streets, however, one thing struck us as curious enough—the profusion with which medals are lavished on all who have served any time. It is quite ridiculous: a medal would seem to be given for every action, great or small, in which the troops are not beaten. We often see sergeants with as many as *seven* medals glittering in a line across the breast, like watches in a shop-window.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PEASANT IN CHURCH ; SIGN OF THE CROSS ; BELLS ; SUPERSTITIONS.

Popular devotions—Priests—Chanting—Genuflexions—Melancholysight—Ignorance of true religion—Crossing themselves from morn to night—Their respect for bells—Pleasant associations—Superstitions—Fortune-telling—Gipsies—Lucky days—Thirteen at table—Upsetting the salt—Meeting a monk, &c.—Fatalism—Opposed to insurances, &c.—Russians very charitable to the poor.

WITH all their equipages and decorations, this crowd of nobles, foreigners, and soldiers, in the gay Nefskoï, is not so attractive as our humble friends in the sheepskins. To a stranger, the genuine new-caught Russian is worth all his civilized superiors in the empire. Whenever he may be seen, he is a most interesting subject for study ; but nowhere more than in church.

Follow him into the beautiful temple of the Virgin of Kasan, and you find him on his knees, repeating his prayers after the priest, with a fluency which nothing can arrest, and a devotion which nothing can distract. Pass him, or jostle him as you may, he is too deeply engaged with his pious work to take the least notice of you. It is always painful to be present, an unconcerned spectator, where a religious service is going forward in which the heart cannot join. We feel as if intruding on that which we have no right to witness, and seem to scoff without wishing to do so. In Russia, however, there is no occa-

sion for feeling thus. Let the stranger take off his hat on entering, and he is no more looked at than one of the pillars: he disturbs nobody.

We are here surrounded by splendour. The noble simplicity of the design—two long pillared aisles in the form of a cross—only renders the richness of the materials more conspicuous. From a floor of the costliest marble, the eye rises to a light and lofty dome, spangled with stars of gold, that twinkle from a sky of the deepest blue. There is neither gallery nor buttress to break the fine height. Even the dais, occupied by the priests, scarcely breaks the general outline; it is but a simple step or two, not far from the entrance. There they stand, in strong array, with long beards flowing over their robes of embroidered crimson, and wearing a lofty black hat, that gives yet more dignity to their stately forms. Their deep rich voices make the vaults ring, as they chant the prayers, aided by a band of bearded choristers, ranged beside singing-desks, within a side-railing. Great care being taken in training the singers, this part of the service is always exceedingly impressive: finer voices we have never heard.

But the crowd of worshippers is the most interesting sight. Every person as he enters kisses the sacred picture near the door, or tries to reach that hanging on the wall,—to which latter, as it is of more than ordinary sanctity, you may see parents raising their little infants, that they too may touch it with their lips. Of these effigies, as hinted elsewhere, the more sacred usually have the brow, the cheeks, and the arms covered with silver, the votive offering of the pious, whose gratitude to

the saint whom he thus seeks to honour for deliverance from sickness or danger has overcome his taste ; for the appearance given to the picture by this tinsel covering is truly ludicrous. What makes them more hideous to the indifferent spectator, however, only gives them greater attraction in the eyes of the faithful. To these, accordingly, the people flock in greatest numbers.

His salutation over, the peasant selects a place for himself on the floor, as near the priest as possible. There is a woman in one of the aisles, with a small table or basket before her, selling long slender tapers ; and from her the more devout make a purchase, and, lighting it, set their offering on one of the little triangular frames of wood, planted among the pillars, and stuck all over with nails for attaching these gifts to. Though it be sabbath, many workmen are busy polishing some steps with pumice, within a few feet of the officiating priests ; but no one is distracted by the noise ; the people come here to pray, not to look about them.

The mutterings and prostrations of the worshippers are most singular. Some, on the outskirts of the assembly, may remain standing ; but the greater part have their knees bent to the naked floor. At certain words, however, all, both those who were standing and those who kneel, strike their very foreheads on the earth, with great vehemence, uttering, at the same time, some words from the priest ; and this again and again before the service is finished. Some poor old women are always the most conspicuous in these violent manœuvres ; but all ages and classes, and both sexes, join with more or less ardour. At vespers, we have seen most respectably-

dressed ladies going through the whole ceremony with great fury. In short, the mummary of their religion surpasses all that we had previously witnessed. There is nothing like it in Catholic countries: it can only be compared to the violence of some of the Hindus. One can scarcely describe the emotion which he feels on seeing a crowded assembly going through all these crossings, and attitudes, and genuflexions, so strange and so outrageous. It is impossible not to be moved with sorrow for those who look upon such things as constituting religion.

Whether this extreme attention to *forms* be accompanied with any real religious *knowledge* is a question which few foreigners are qualified to decide. Judging, however, from what we are told by Russians themselves, we cannot hesitate to say, that, with the lower orders in this country, religion is little better than superstition. Of the true nature of the Great Atonement they are utterly ignorant; and even of the first principle of all religion, the Existence of a Supreme, they entertain the most imperfect notions. With the boor, God is only something higher than the emperor; they think not of him as an omnipotent spiritual Being, but as one residing they know not where, who will punish them for neglecting church and their prescribed forms, nearly in the same way as they would be punished for disobeying a mandate of the emperor. Of a future state their notions are also very indefinite.

In short, as has often been said before now, “the Russian’s religion consists in being able to *make the sign of the cross*.” He is crossing himself all day long.

When he first comes forth into the open air, in the morning, if no church be in sight from his own door, he listens for the first sound of some bell, then, turning towards it, crosses himself with great fervour, to ensure a blessing on the undertakings of the day. He crosses himself before and after each meal. When you make a bargain with him, he crosses himself that it may prosper. When his countryman spits upon him (as they do by way of anathema, when in anger with each other), he meekly crosses himself, to avert the curse. When the peasant, who is to drive you, takes the reins in his hand, he crosses himself to keep away accidents; and every steeple he passes gets the same mark of respect. Sometimes the edifice thus saluted is so far off that the stranger wonders at the quickness shown in discovering it, and is often at a loss to catch the distant hamlet where it stands. In like manner, the person sitting beside you in any public conveyance crosses himself every time you start with new horses. What the old do thus frequently, the young of course imitate. If you give a child a piece of money, its little hand is up in a moment, to make the sign of the cross, by way of blessing and thanking you.

Much of this crossing work may be seen at all hours—even in the streets;—for, whether in the city or in the country, no Russian ever passes a church without pausing when he comes opposite its centre, to make the sign of the cross, from brow to breast, and utter some pious ejaculation, prescribed for the occasion. This operation may be seen going on incessantly, before every church of the capital; and on the most frequented walks there are certain small places, like shrines, with pictures and

gilding in them, in front of which it is also performed. It is not alone the grave and the aged who pause at these places, but also the giddy and the young. You have just seen some gray-haired general do it—but wait one minute; a laughing band of youngsters is coming up. Now they are opposite the church or the shrine—their mirth and their talk have ceased,—each crosses himself devoutly—utters a prayer or two—you see his lips moving—then passes gravely on, the laugh and the jest being resumed only when they are some way off.

So far is this crossing mania carried, that when a Russian enters your room he cannot say “Good morning!” till he has crossed himself to the Saviour’s picture. A man in any public way, such as an innkeeper, must always have a picture hung in his own apartment, in addition to that in the public room, to which each Russian turns before he sits down to eat. While at breakfast at an inn one morning, in a small room off the public one, we were roused by the solemn chanting of a priest in his robes, whom we found, with his attendants, praying before the picture of our Saviour in the corner. Waiting to learn how the ceremony would close, we saw abundance of the usual signing; with the painted wooden crucifix in his hand, about a foot long, he made the sign of the cross towards each of the four corners, and withdrew. It appears that some of the priests have little to live by beyond the offerings obtained from the people, for these chantings and crossings before their sacred images, or for saying prayers in families on high holidays.

Another very remarkable part of the religion of the

Russians is their respect for bells ; and there is something so inexpressibly sweet in the sound of all we hear in this country that we can almost forgive this superstition. The air resounds with them from morn to eve. Every church is furnished with several ; and among these some are very expensive. They have not the deep solemn sound of English bells, but a rich sweetness, never heard except here, and said, poetically perhaps, to arise from the predominance of silver in their composition. They are not *swung*, as with us ; as if this were deemed too rude a way of treating these venerated objects, it is merely the *tongue* that is moved. This is accomplished by tying a cord to the tapering point, and then pulling it forward or allowing it to sink back, so as to strike either side at pleasure. No sooner has the peasant caught the sound than his fingers are in motion to his forehead.

This reverence, perhaps, begins even when they are in the hands of the founder. The child casts its mite into the melting mass, and the beggar his only alms. The bride gives her ornaments, and the princess sells her pearls ; all are eager to aid in the pious work. Gold and silver are, in consequence, so profusely parted with on such occasions that some of these bells have grown to be the monarchs of their tribe. Russia boasts of having the largest bells in the world.

The day on which a bell is consecrated is always marked with great solemnity and rejoicing ; and throughout the whole of its existence it joins in the joy and in the gloom of the flock over which it presides, for it is tolled on every occasion of sorrow or of gladness. Little wonder that these objects are so much beloved ; for,

perhaps, the happiest and most romantic associations of the Russian are linked with his village bells.

In a land where there is so little bordering on romance this trait of national character is not unwelcome. But if we attempt to ascertain what it is they worship in their bells the result will be far from distinct. We could never learn whether the salute in passing a church be to the building or to the metal: that it proceeds from respect to Him with whose service they are connected would be asserting too much of a people with the great mass of whom religion, we fear, is nothing but ignorance.

The Russians also place great reliance on the gifts of fortune-tellers. Gipsies consequently are a privileged race, and drive a thriving trade in the land. In short, the instances of credulity and weakness met with among the lower, and not unknown even among the higher, classes are most melancholy. The belief in lucky and unlucky days, for setting out on a journey or commencing any undertaking — the evil consequences of meeting certain kinds of people, such as a monk — the danger of having thirteen at dinner, or of upsetting the salt; in fact, all the absurdities which were so prevalent in Scotland, and which are not yet quite abandoned in many parts of it, still reign here with undiminished authority.

Their enmity to vaccination, already mentioned, arises from some superstitious scruple; and we all know that its introduction was opposed from similar motives, even in more enlightened countries, where it was pronounced impious to adopt any such means for averting what was sent by Heaven.

It would appear to be from some notions of the same kind that the Russians have such a reluctance to insure

houses, or property of any description. It is long since attempts were made to establish insurance companies; but, until very lately, such unbecoming schemes never met with encouragement. In fact, they are half Turks in their practice, if not in their faith; and act as if it were impious to struggle against fate.

One thing, however, must be mentioned that is greatly to their credit—their charity to the poor. In St. Petersburg very few beggars are to be seen; but in the country villages, when a carriage or stage-coach stops, some of them are instantly in attendance; and we never saw a Russian dismiss them unrelieved. A bearded merchant, with whom we travelled for a few days, seldom passed a halting-place without leaving a liberal alms and his blessing.

It were unjust not to admit, also, that in the character of the nation at large there may be discovered much of that meekness which is one of the best fruits of genuine religion. Their lords may be proud and tyrannical, but the people are the most patient, submissive creatures imaginable. Neither insult nor blows drive them to revenge. For ten times less than what we have seen a Russian endure without a murmur, an Italian would plunge his knife to the hilt in the breast of his dearest friend. There is something touching in the patience with which wrong is endured here. You see a man struck—it is a too frequent sight. He is strong enough to crush like a worm the thing that has smote him; yet his hand is not raised in return: the silent reproach of his eye tells that he is not insensible to the indignity, though he will not, or dare not, resent it.

But of this more in a new chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

CRUELTY WITH WHICH THE LOWER ORDERS ARE TREATED—THEIR FOOD.

Meekness under the harshest usage—The scourge—Beatings—Severity of masters—Ladies and their servants—Family executioner—The butler punished—Brutality of government underlings—Scene with the policeman—with the post-office clerk—"Off hats"—Spitting when angry—Peasants kind and happy with each other—Their general character—Honesty—Easily contented—Their food—Cucumbers, cabbage, sours—Wages—In general, better provided in regard to food and lodging than the Irish and some of the Scotch peasantry.

THE position in which the Russian serfs stand towards the proprietors of the soil will be more particularly mentioned at a future page, when the emperor's reforms come to be discussed. At present, we are giving merely a few *general* facts, illustrative of the condition of the lower orders.

The peasant, then, as was hinted at the close of the last chapter, seems to be at the mercy of all who choose to lift the arm against him. His lord orders him stripes, as many and as often as he pleases. The poor creature is made to stoop on his hands and knees, while a man smites him with a rod on the back the prescribed number of times. Though degrading, however, this chastisement is not often severe: it is quite distinct from the terrible *knout*, which is inflicted only by the sentence of a judge, and lacerates the sufferer so dreadfully, that it

is long before he recovers, if at all.* This latter species of torture we never saw inflicted; indeed we purposely avoided seeing it: but no one can be long in Russia without seeing many instances of the common beating. When a workman offends his overseer, he is punished with stripes. A poor labourer on one of the churches, who had been ordered to let none pass through a certain part of the building, having inadvertently allowed a party of us to do so, remonstrated with us for our conduct, and, in enumerating the serious consequences that would ensue to him from our trespass, significantly pointed to his back, imitating the blows which awaited him.

Nobles and military men, all who wear a government uniform of any kind, seem to possess—or if they do not possess it, they exercise—the privilege of beating the lower orders, whenever they feel offended with any of them. It is thus that the peasants crouch before their superiors in terror. Even the *servants* of the better classes claim the privilege of beating those beneath them; but it is only to be themselves beaten in their turn by the master himself, or by his executioner,—who, though this may not be his name, is an indispensable appendage to every great establishment. The Russians try to conceal from strangers that they chastise their domestic servants in this way: we ourselves saw no instance of it, but we have been told by an Italian, in whom we have every confidence, who had lived among the nobles in the country, that he knew it to be a regular practice. At dinner one day, in the house of a man of

* See Chap. XXII. on *Prisons*, &c.

high rank, one of the principal servants, equivalent to our butler, omitted something at table—a *mère* trifle; but the master's blood was chafed at the mistake—his face grew black. He was too polite, however, to say a word before a stranger; but this self-command did not save the offender. The *private signal* had been given to the man of the scourge, who understands too well to need that his master should betray his barbarity in the presence of foreigners; and that night a respectable domestic *bled* for an offence which everywhere else would have been sufficiently rebuked with a word!

None are more strict, he said, than *ladies* in punishing their servants. The executioner's office is never a sinecure in families where there is no master. Delicate creatures they must be, these Russian dames!

Even in other parts of Europe, the Russians—gentlemen at least—cannot, good imitators though they be, at all times forget their native rights so completely as to refrain from striking those whom they have brought from home with them. If they comply with our usages so far as not to do it very openly, they indemnify themselves for the denial by a little private discipline now and then. For when some gentlemen were lately about to take possession of their apartments at Rome, the person in charge hinted that, though they were *forestieri*, she hoped they would not give her the same sort of trouble which a *Principe Russo*, the tenant for two winters past, had been in the way of giving. He was a very good personage in every other thing, but used to get into such a fury with his servant, and beat him so unmercifully, that poor Barbara lay quaking all night, in fear of finding

one of the parties dead in the morning; and so she would, had either of them been of her own less enduring country.

But though every noble may strike with his own hands, or order his domestic servants to be beaten by others, it is a mistake to assert, as has been often done, that a Russian nobleman can order *any* poor man, at whom he takes offence, to be beaten with rods. *Without the concurrence of a magistrate*, no person can be formally beaten, unless by his own master, or by his orders. This beafig process, therefore, though there be quite enough of it, still does not go on to such an extent as Dr. Clarke and other authors have represented, in their well-wrought pictures of the emperor beating his prime minister, the prime minister his secretary, and so downwards, till, from the first to the last link in the social chain of Russia, there is nothing but stripes and howling from morning to night.

This nominal protection of the magistrate, however, does not shield the poor man from much contumely and much wrong. The brutality with which he is treated is often of such a kind as to be almost incredible when repeated. A gentleman told us one day at dinner, that he had just seen a police-officer reprimanding his inferior on the public quay. After abusing him in the most dreadful terms—Russian abuse is altogether hideous—he took the offender's nose in his fingers, and twisted it violently, then spit in his face, and walked away. With so good a lesson in rudeness from his superior, the poor watchman who had been thus treated would, of course, tear the beard and trample on the body of the first peasant who fell into his clutches.

It should be mentioned, however, as a part of Russian character, that this man, so ready to twist his inferior's nose, would be the most cringing creature possible before a superior. It is in this class of subordinates that the worst specimens of the nation are to be found. Unfortunately, these are precisely the people whom foreigners come most in contact with; and, such being the case, can it be wondered at that so many travellers go away with an abhorrence of the nation?

There is nothing that a Russian underling is so tenacious of, as that every person who has anything to do with him shall take off his hat before him—a formality which Britons in general are so little prepared for, that we were not surprised to read in the newspapers some time ago, of an Englishman at St. Petersburg having got into most serious difficulty, in consequence of some rudeness shown to him at a public institution, before the officers of which he had not supposed it necessary to cringe hat in hand.

We can fully believe what has been reported of this case, after witnessing the following *off-hat* scene in the lobby of a post-office in one of the towns in the interior. A foreigner, who had a letter to despatch, knocked at the little window, and civilly asked the clerk who appeared, “*Est-ce ici que l'on affranchit les lettres pour Saint-Petersbourg?*”

“*Otez votre chapeau, d'abord,*” was the reply, “*et je vous dirai.*”

“*Je l'aurais déjà fait si j'avais su que c'était nécessaire; mais je ne suis pas chez vous; je me trouve dans la foule, et dans une telle position je ne vous dois pas cette politesse.*”

“ *Otez votre chapeau, je vous dis,*” roared he in rising choler. “ *On le fait toujours devant des gens comme-il-faut.*”

“ *Monsieur, je ne viens pas pour discuter. Faites-moi le plaisir de prendre ma lettre—*”

“ *Otez votre chapeau,*” was again the monster’s reply, “ *Otez votre chapeau, ou je ferme la grille.*”

It would have been superfluous to have told this man *comme-il-faut*, that it was never customary to take off the hat to a person when you were speaking through a hole to him—that neither in London, Paris, nor St. Petersburg, was it usual to make people take off their hats in a public lobby. To have reasoned with him longer would have been as wise as to hold parley with the Russian bear. The best argument for such a man, and the whole of his too numerous tribe, is that employed by the emperor, who causes every fellow guilty of behaving rudely in matters of duty to be scourged *comme-il-faut*.

Generally speaking, nothing can be more brutal than the conduct of every man wearing a uniform, whenever he has it in his power : it is in this way that the underling revenges himself for the contumelious treatment he is doomed to endure from those above him. To the poor in particular, they behave in a way which it makes the cheek burn to think of. Fortunately, however, this official brutality is not imitated by people of the lower ranks in their intercourse with each other. Their taskmasters may be cruel and arbitrary, but the peasants among themselves are affectionate and sympathising to a remarkable degree : they may squabble *in words*, and

that most furiously—railing at each other with amazing volubility—but they seldom come to blows. One part of their conduct to each other, when angry, is far from laudable—it is the fashion, already alluded to, of *spitting* with contempt at the man who displeases them. This is done also by the better classes, with those whom they cannot venture to beat. In fact, it is common in all ranks ; and is put in force on all occasions of provocation or dissatisfaction, however trivial. Thus, a person who was one day helping us to buy a carriage, was so much offended by the coachmaker's exorbitant demands, that he spit upon him and turned away in disdain. The fashion would seem to be of Oriental origin. Mussulmen, it is well known, *spit on the ground* when enraged.

It is seldom, however, that the lower orders of Russians go beyond this in their quarrels. We never saw a fight amongst them of any kind, but scenes of hugging and kissing are most amazingly frequent among the bearded gentlemen. Their politeness to each other knows no bounds. Two fellows in sheepskins, when they happen to be intimate friends, bow to each other in passing as profoundly as a couple of French academicians. This bowing propensity is not so indiscriminate, however, as among the French, who bow to all, friend and foe, but more especially to their superiors. The Russian, on the other hand, seldom takes any notice of those he does not know : it is only to his woolly brother that his ragged hat comes off in passing along the road. To the stranger who asks his assistance, however, he is most polite, being all attention to his but half-intelligible inquiries, and at great pains to aid him in every way. The smallest trifle

pleases in the shape of a reward for any service of this kind. If you are a foreigner, and speak the language imperfectly, he will never smile at your blunders, as most Englishmen do, and cannot resist doing, when addressed by a foreigner in similar circumstances. Instead of laughing at you for making mistakes, the Russian's wonder seems to be that you know a word at all; and though generally quick in seizing your intentions, even when imperfectly expressed, he is always eager to encourage, and help out with the attempted explanation.

Duplicity and treachery, so far as our experience went, are extremely rare amongst them. We do not recollect a single attempt to extort money from us on the score of our being foreigners. The shopkeepers, indeed, always asked too much for anything we wanted to buy; but this they practise on their own countrymen with the same latitude as on strangers: it is never looked upon as cheating, but merely as a necessary branch of the art of bargaining, which both parties, buyer and seller, are supposed to have studied in its fullest extent.

In short, we have every reason to look upon the great mass of the people as of excellent natural dispositions—patient under wrong—amiable, warm-hearted, and grateful to those who treat them well. When confidence is reposed in them, their honesty is proof against every temptation. It is well known that there is a particular class of poor peasants, from certain districts in the interior, employed by the greatest merchants of St. Petersburg, in collecting and paying money; and such is their integrity, that, though sums to a vast amount are daily passing through their hands, not a penny has ever been

embezzled by them. An English merchant, who probably pays away more than any other trader in Russia, says, that he has for many years been in the habit of sending money to remote parts of the country by one of these men, without ever losing one farthing of it ; though, from the distance of the places where the payments had to be made, he had repeatedly had it in his power to embezzle large sums, without the remotest chance of detection until too late.

From the whole of our intercourse with them, therefore, as well as what we heard from friends who have been long in St. Petersburg, we are firmly persuaded that Dr. Clarke's character of the lower orders of Russians is unjust. Faults they have, and those not a few ; but they are not the lying, dishonest creatures he paints them, more than they are the exemplary, faultless beings which Russian authors have of late begun to hold them up for.

The Russian peasant is satisfied with the plainest food. No people in Europe are so coarsely fed. Their diet consists of the most acrid articles that were ever devised—pickled cucumbers, pickled cabbage, or pickled mushrooms, with a piece of black bread, are their daily fare. At rare intervals, they may taste a little fish, or even butcher-meat ; but these also—the fish at all events—are atrociously acrid. To satisfy this taste for sours, the quantity of cucumbers raised here is quite surprising : every market-place in the kingdom displays heaps of them from side to side. In the country towns, a hundred good ones may be bought for threepence. At the tables of the middle classes they are seen

almost every day, and are presented in the usual way—that is, in slices. But the poor seldom use them until prepared in something of the following fashion:—A cask, not always very clean, is strewed with a layer of fresh oak-leaves at the bottom. Over this, a layer of cucumbers is placed; after which, more leaves—then cucumbers again—and so on till the vessel is full. A pickle of salt and water is now poured in, till the whole be well saturated; and so strong is the compound, that, when stored in a cold place, the cucumbers will keep a whole year in their briny element. Eaten in moderation, the cucumber thus prepared will be found a very tolerable relish, even by the stranger.

Their *cabbage* we did not taste, but were told that it is not unlike the *sauer-kraut* of the Germans, though the mode of preparation is not quite the same. Instead of employing vinegar and juniper-leaves in the process, the Russians simply slice the vegetable very small, then pour water over it, and let the compound lie until the cabbage becomes sour by the fermentation that has taken place. This fermenting process goes best on, of course, in warm weather: when it has been favourably performed, the vegetable may be preserved till summer come again.

We have said that *mushrooms* constitute another great article of food among the peasants; but of the way in which these are preserved, as well as of the nature of some other national dishes, something will be said in another place. Suffice it here to state that, as eaten by the peasant, mushrooms are beyond all endurable sourness. We remember tasting them one day in a market-

place among some soldiers, who were licking their lips with delight over them ; and we thought the taste most horrid. They appear to salt them as we would beef.

In short, the Russian peasant lives on sours—unless his food burn the palate, it would do him no good. But, without dwelling longer on this subject, enough has been said to show that his diet is wretched. As may easily be inferred, it is also very unwholesome. The constant use of nothing but salted food renders the Russians more liable to scorbutic diseases than any nation in Europe. Though now less frequent, these are still extremely common.

That the food of the Russian peasant should be so poor will not surprise any, who consider that his earnings are exceedingly small. Nine roubles a week—or seven shillings and sixpence, English—are frequently all that a labourer can gain ; and, even in the manufactories, the best hands earn only eleven roubles, or nine shillings and sixpence of our money.

On the whole, however, so far at least as mere food and lodging are concerned, the Russian peasant is not so badly off as the poor man amongst ourselves. He may be rude and uneducated—liable to be ill-treated by his superiors—intemperate in his habits, and filthy in his person ; but he never knows the misery to which the Irish peasant is exposed. His food may be coarse ; but he has abundance of it. His hut may be homely ; but it is dry and warm. We are apt to fancy that if our peasantry be badly off, we can at least flatter ourselves with the assurance that they are much more comfortable than those of foreign countries. But this is a gross

delusion. Not in Ireland only, but in parts of Great Britain usually considered to be exempt from the miseries of Ireland, we have witnessed wretchedness compared with which the condition of the Russian boor is luxury, whether he live amid the crowded population of large towns, or in the meanest hamlets of the interior. There are parts of Scotland, for instance, where the people are lodged in houses which the Russian peasant would not think fit for his cattle. During the present autumn (1838), in the rich and populous county of Inverness, we have beheld scenes of wretchedness, exceeding all that we ever witnessed, either in Russia or any other part of the world. There is one valley, that of Glenelg, where the families share their cabin with the cow and the pig; the latter, aided by a starved chicken or two, contending with the children for the comforts of their scanty fire, from which the cow is separated only by a wattled partition, the door in which is generally left open, that the breath of the animal may help the fire to keep the inmates warm. Chimney there is none in these miserable cabins; so that clouds of smoke constantly fill every corner, or issue from every crevice in the roof and walls: while, there being but one common door to the two divisions—that of the family and the cow—all that enter have to wade through the filth and water of the byre, before they can reach the precarious shelter of the principal quarter.

Compare the comforts of the Russian peasant with such misery as this! Before wasting our pity on him we ought to look at home, and try to silence the outcry which foreigners so justly raise against us, when they

witness such scenes as these, in the wealthiest and most civilized country in the world.

Let it not be supposed, however, that because we admit the Russian peasant to be in many respects more comfortable than some of our own, we therefore consider his lot as, on the whole, more enviable than that of the peasant in a free country like ours. The distance between them is wide—immeasurable; but it can be accounted for in one single word—*the British peasant has rights; the Russian has none!* Does mere abundance of food and fuel compensate for the want of all that gives a man respect in his own eyes, or dignity in the estimation of others? The hut of the meanest peasant in Britain is inviolable; that of the Russian may be invaded without permission and without warning. The poor man with us is not *chained* to his dwelling, but is free to dispose of his skill and labour where he thinks they will bring him the best return, without once consulting the lord of the soil, or paying him part of what he may earn throughout life. Above all, he is not liable to be transported as a convict to Siberia at the caprice of his lord—relentlessly torn from wife, and friends, and home, without the power of remonstrance or the right of appeal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT ASLEEP, AND AT WORK.

Sleeping in the streets—Fearless workmen—Giddy ladders—The man and the weathercock—Using the hatchet—Ingenious in copying anything—Rustic pianoforte—Dexterous employment of their tools.

BEFORE leaving the Russian peasant altogether, let us glance at him in his ordinary pursuits. We have already seen some of his ways, but he is such an interesting fellow, that a few more moments with him will not weary.

Watch him, for instance, at work, and you will find him labouring most diligently — getting through an amazing quantity in any given time. So willing is he to toil while any good may be done, that, in the summer season, he lives almost without sleep. As if he had taken his fill of it in the long winter, he will now toil both night and day, with little rest beyond the hurried snatches of slumber at meal-hours. He seems to care little for a bed, so long as the nights are short : the first shed or the first gutter is couch dainty enough for him. In the country villages, along the high-road, crowds of labourers may be seen stretched asleep in the open air, by the sides of houses ; but in the capital, none are to be seen in the streets at night. During the day, however, just as among the poorer orders at Naples, you may see them in dozens, stretched near the house where they have

been hewing, or by the boat which they were unloading, sleeping till the work-bell rouses them.

What struck us most in regard to these slumbering scenes was, the suddenness with which they fall into repose. Some men are said to be able to command sleep the moment they court its favours: the Russian peasant would seem to have the same power, for he is asleep as soon as the tools are thrown down. One moment of the vacant hour is given to the scanty meal—a poor onion, when cucumber may not be had, and a piece of rye-bread, need but little carving—and all the rest is bestowed on what, next to drinking, seems to be their favourite dissipation. They have no idea of filling up their idle time with a book, or talk, or any other intellectual exercise; like the beasts that perish, when appetite has been satisfied, they have no resource but slumber.

The positions they choose for this purpose are often most surprising. Where a piece of pavement is under repair, in a crowded street, you may see them sleeping among the stones and mud, liable to be run over by the first wheel. A droschkyman falls asleep, standing by his horse's shoulder, and leaning his head on the poor animal, which never moves an ear for fear of disturbing him. In short, a Russian sleeps in every attitude, and on every kind of bed—sitting or standing—on the top of dung-carts, or perched on a load of stones. He is everywhere as happy as on a silken bed.

Sometimes the post which he takes up is still more dangerous: we have seen workmen stretched on the ridge of some roof which they had been repairing; and,

passing along the quays, they may be seen at any time soundly asleep on the narrow parapet, where, if they turn but from the right side to the left, they have not an inch to save them from rolling into the deep river below. They may even be seen fast asleep in the sun on the narrow edge of a loaded barge, near the strongest part of the stream : yet, so sound is their repose, that though you watch them till their short hour is out, you will not see them move limb nor feature. Tell the peasant of his danger, in thus exposing himself—remonstrate with him on his rashness—and he will not understand you. He does not know what fear is : his fatalism makes him careless of life.

He would even seem to have an affection for giddy and terrifying positions. There is a kind of ladder used here—a single tree, often sixty feet long, with steps, about fifteen inches in length, nailed across it, affording almost no hold to feet or hands. At this season of cleaning and scrubbing, you are every minute passing some of these, raised from the street to the eaves, with a man seated at top, brushing away as thoughtless as if on the pavement. Nay, so little do they think of danger, that there is a companion below shifting the ladder every minute, to bring his comrade into a new position—both as fearless as if it could not be easily pushed from its balance, and one of them, at least, be dashed to pieces by the fall. This, in fact, does sometimes happen ; but the mangled body is soon carried to the hospital, and the survivor, calmly raising the ladder, mounts to the vacant post, humming his interrupted song, before the blood has dried on the stones.

This intrepidity is often shown on heights more perilous than those now mentioned. Something had lately gone wrong about the angel that is perched on the lofty spire of the cathedral, in the fortress; which, being at an elevation of 350 feet from the ground, is among the most conspicuous ornaments of the capital. The repair wanted was so trivial that it could have been done by a single workman in a few minutes. But how to get him raised to the airy weathercock was a question of difficult solution. To think of erecting a scaffolding, of some hundred feet, for such a small affair, was out of the question. Still, as the accident occasioned an eyesore from the palace-windows, it was desirable to have it remedied in some way or other. For a long time, however, the superintendent was in despair; until at last relief presented itself through one of his workmen, a common *moozik* (peasant), who offered to climb up and put all right for 300 roubles. Consent having been gladly given, he mounted as far as possible inside, then crawled out by a hole, stuck in pegs for steps outside, as far as his arm could reach; and so, always driving in a new peg before he left the old one, crept fearlessly round and round the giddy spire, till he reached a point from which he could throw a rope over a projecting part of the figure; he then swung himself at once into the necessary position, where he plied his tools as calmly as if on solid ground! The spectators below were forced to turn away their heads in terror, expecting every moment to see him dashed to pieces; but he descended as safely as he had gone up.

The emperor, who never loses an opportunity of re-

warding conduct of this kind, hearing of what had been done, caused a calculation to be laid before him of the expense which would have been incurred for scaffolding, wages, &c., had the repair been executed in the ordinary way, and presented the poor fellow with the amount—enough to keep him comfortable for life, without handling axe or rope again.

The neatness with which a Russian workman uses his tools is unequalled. In place of the ten or twelve different instruments, which a carpenter in other countries must have constantly about him, a Russian has only three or four; indeed, his principal and often sole companion is the axe—a sharp and good one it is, with a short handle. We have often watched him at work, laying a floor or making a chair, and it is really astonishing what he does with it alone. The ease, and the grace even, with which he wields it—always with one hand—would be a lesson to the most skilful of our artisans. Without plane or line, he cuts and joins two deals, as neatly as if they were one. A firm hand, a good eye, and great coolness, supply the place of tools to him.

The facility of imitation possessed by the Russians is another remarkable point in their character. They cannot *invent*, but will *copy* anything you choose to set before them. Say only, I want the match of this; and done it is—as correct a fac-simile as could be desired. They will make not only small things in this way, but even large articles of the most complicated construction. We have examined a pianoforte, made the other year by a peasant in some country place, who had never seen but

one in his life before. He had very few tools at command ; but, thinking he should like to have an instrument to match the one whose sweet sounds had given him so much pleasure, he set to work, and made a most excellent copy. Some one having told the emperor of the feat, a handsome price was offered for the instrument, and it now occupies an honourable place in his own palace at Moscow.

These imitations are not confined to ~~the~~ ruder branches of mere mechanical labour. The Russians are equally successful in copying pictures, and in all the more delicate kinds of work, requiring accuracy of eye and delicacy of touch.

CHAPTER XIV.

POPULAR AMUSEMENTS ON THE ISLANDS.

Dances—Songs—Tales of a droschky—Russians fond of music—Summer-evening amusements—Dancing scene—Singing—Droschky journey—Anecdotes of the Isvoshtchiks—Merry scenes on the Islands—Boating—More singing—Gay gardens—Noble villas—Mineral waters, &c.

PASSING from these physical pursuits, we shall find that in nothing are the imitative qualities of the Russians better seen, than in their national amusements and pastimes. To aid them in these, they possess great powers of mimicry ; their excellence in which is of course greatly seconded by another endowment which, as may be inferred, from allusions already made, they possess in no ordinary degree—liveliness. They are blessed with an astonishing flow of animal spirits. The fun and drollery displayed among them, when two or three are banded together on an idle holiday, are inexhaustible. Their wit is surpassed only by their playfulness and good-humour. On such occasions, dancing is a favourite amusement ; and as for singing, whether there be holiday or not, they torment you with it beyond endurance. They sing for ever—such singing as makes you wish them fifty miles away. It is only the untutored song, however, that is disagreeable : when taught, they make excellent musicians. The regimental bands, it is well known, are among the best in Europe. So strong is

their natural turn for music, that a lad taken from the plough will play the most difficult pieces in six months, on any instrument that may have been selected for him.

These qualities of imitation and liveliness make them excellent actors. They are born comedians; even the most vulgar of them showing a strong passion for everything dramatic. On the stage, consequently, they are extremely natural, and keep the audience in constant laughter.

The national dance is very pretty. As seen in the theatre, it is an artificial unnatural series of complicated evolutions, intended to show the skill of the *artiste*, more than the real features of the dance, of which only some of the characteristics are retained. The true place for seeing it in perfection is among a group of peasants, keeping holiday in some of the suburbs. We had wandered out in one of the finest evenings of July, through the wide, quiet lanes in the lower part of the Vassilii-Ostroff. Scarcely a creature was stirring in the calm sunset. We had reached the place where the houses almost terminate, or, at least, become more rare; where little is to be seen but extensive green meadows, neglected and marshy, with low bushes and rough trees scattered about. In short, there was so little to interest, that we began to think of returning,—when a shout of laughter from the neighbourhood of some houses farther on induced us to advance. It came from a large group, assembled in a shady green lane, young men and maidens, all in the national dress. It was an unmixed Russian scene. Within the group stood a ring of dancers. Shortly, a youth touched a small instrument, the simplest

ever heard : it was their *balileka*, a tiny thing of white fir-wood, shaped like a guitar, but only an inch thick, and with no more than three small strings, which the little boy jingled in a sort of measured way with his fingers, without attempting any thing like a tune. The sound was so faint that it was scarcely heard a few yards off, but no sooner was it struck than the whole ring was in motion, wreathed hand in hand. It is a beautiful dance, with something of classic gracefulness, and not the least motion that could be offensive to delicacy. As they twisted and turned, now moving slow, now quick, the descriptions of the mazy dance of ancient Greece recurred to the memory. Soon, however, the whole again stood still—the dancers unlinked their hands—a maiden stood forth, and waved her white kerchief slowly and gracefully towards a youth, who, on the signal, pursued her round the ring at respectful distance. Once she allowed him to come near ; but again she fled. At short intervals they would pause, and dance before each other, the youth now beating his right foot, in regular measure, on the sward, now waving his flowing caftan not inelegantly, as he turned in giddiness away from the glances of his beloved. At length it seemed as if the lover was to be rewarded with his mistress's hand ; but ever as he took courage to come nearer, the coy maiden was off, flying from, yet courting his pursuit. This part of the dance continued till despair made him abandon the chase ; on which the circle was again formed, and all tripped merrily round. There is nothing violent in these dances ; every motion is slow and dignified ; the woman resting her arms akimbo, and her partner calculating each step

he is to make. All the men were in holiday dress ; long blue robes, striped shirts, wide trousers, and huge boots.

The lovely evening invited to a farther stroll on the beach. On coming back to the merry crowd, the dance had given way to the song. The maidens had left the group, but the men had formed a larger ring, and, united by their handkerchiefs from hand to hand, were moving slowly round two of their number, a big one and a little, standing in the centre. All the time this was going on, the whole band were singing a slow and very striking melody, which strongly resembled some of our old Scotch airs. They sung in parts, and kept up a kind of dramatic scene, of which those in the middle sustained the principal characters. The words, of course, were unintelligible to us ; but the excellent pantomime which followed spoke for itself, especially where the big one feigned himself fatigued, and the little one,—who had a handkerchief tied round his head, and acted the part of a female,—tenderly taking off his (or her) partner's hat, fans him with well-assumed anxiety. She then wipes and braids his hair, opens his vest to give him air, and finally prevails on him to renew the dance.

We are not ignorant that some of the Russian dances are of a much less innocent character ; but on this occasion, at least, it was impossible not to be struck with the orderly conduct of the lower classes. We had already experienced that it was possible to wander the streets all day long without meeting a single instance of rudeness ; and we now discovered that strangers might look even on their amusements, when neither policeman nor patrol was within reach, without being at all annoyed.

Several ladies, and other casual passengers, were attracted to this group of youngsters, and listened attentively to their fine singing. In England, such intruders would soon have been driven away by improper language, if not maltreated for their curiosity; but here, all went on as if no stranger had been near. Some of the dancers were in the boat as we recrossed; but they seemed more intent in watching the lightning, as it flashed, bright and frequent, on the clear bosom of the Neva, than in eyeing their late visitors.

There is no place where the manners of the people may be seen in all their life more frequently, than in the gardens and pleasure-grounds of the islands lying among the various branches of the Little Neva, the Great and Little Nofka, &c. As these are a long way off, however, we must take a droschky to reach them; and, while on the way, shall tell the reader what a droschky is. Without knowing something about a droschky, no one can say that he knows aught of St. Petersburg.

This is one of the most absurd little vehicles ever invented. It consists of a low narrow seat, covered with black leather, not much larger than a dragoon saddle, and supported on four small wheels, between the two foremost of which is a box for the driver. Any body who has seen a velocipede may form some idea of a droschky: as in that exploded contrivance, so here also, you sit with the feet touching the ground on each side, or rather resting on metal steps; or, if you please, stirrups, which brush the mud below you. There is room, on a push, for two passengers; but they must sit face to face, as comfortable as a pair who should try to mount a horse

together, looking into each other's face. Sometimes the passengers sit sideways, one on each side; or one does so, and the other rides *en cavalier*, holding him or her in his lap; but whatever way they sit, two always cut an awkward figure in these machines.

There is neither flap nor hood to hide you from the *isvoshtchik* (driver), who is generally some peasant that has mustered money enough among his friends in the country to buy a good horse, and hire a droschky, in order to make a little fortune in the capital. His black hat and long blue garment are supposed to give him great dignity; but the filthy state in which his person generally seems to be renders him by no means an enviable companion to sit so near. He has no whip, the long reins terminating in a tough piece of leather, which supplies the place of that article. They drive extremely well; but have the character of being great extortioners when a stranger comes in the way. "How much must I pay for a drive to ———?" "Five roubles," (or 4*s.* 2*d.*) is the answer. If you have Russian enough, offer him 8*d.*, and he is sure to take it. We always found, when in company with Russians, or with countrymen who speak the language, that we could drive an amazing distance for a small sum.

Nor is extortion the worst part of the *isvoshtchiks'* character: they are said to have a hand in many of the robberies and murders of the capital. Winter is the season for these crimes. There are many instances of women and helpless persons, who had employed them at night, having disappeared, and never been heard of. An English traveller has published a case of this kind, where the body, after being stripped of money and va-

luables, was supposed to have been thrown into a hole in the ice of the Neva ; and we ourselves heard similar stories from many quarters. Until we reached Moscow, however, we met with no person who could speak from experience. An English gentleman there told us that he had, the winter before, been the object of one of the most mysterious attacks ever heard of in droschky annals. On leaving the theatre, he had hired the first vehicle that presented itself, and ordered the owner to drive to a certain part of the city. After proceeding for a considerable time through the silent streets, then covered with deep snow, he remarked to his guide that they were far out of the usual line, but received for answer that all would soon be right. On they went, the streets always getting more lonely and more unknown ; when suddenly a man started from the corner of a cross-lane, and attempted to throw the noose of a large rope over the passenger ; but before it caught he was able to disentangle himself, and urged the driver to press on. This command was so reluctantly complied with, that he now began to be suspicious of him, as an accomplice in the attack which had been made. Instead of holding on, he loitered and changed his course, evidently as if in consequence of a premeditated plan. This put the Englishman more on his guard, and he became anxious to leave him ; but before he had time to escape, he felt himself entangled in a strong noose, by which he was dragged from his seat. After trampling upon and bruising him, his assailants robbed him of his watch and pocket-book, then left him senseless, with injuries that kept him long confined to his apartment. Meantime

the authorities had been using every effort to discover the robbers. Several men had been arrested on suspicion, and the knout had not been unsparingly employed to make them confess ; but the gentleman being unable to identify any of those in custody, the affair still remained a mystery at the time we heard the story.

The number of droschkies in Petersburg is immense. Indeed a love for this vehicle would seem to be an inseparable part of the Russian character ; it is to be seen in the remotest corners of the empire. But what especial recommendation it can have in such a climate, and on such roads as may be seen in every Russian town, it would be impossible to discover. There is no kind of shelter in it. When it rains, you are sure to be soaked ; when there is mud, you are defiled to the eyes ; when there is dust, you are choked ; and when there is sun, you are roasted : in short it is most ingeniously contrived for exposing you to the worst of every possible annoyance. It is, at best, a toy-looking carriage ; for we are not speaking, be it remembered, of the gallant and fashionable droschky displayed in the Nefskoï, but of the genuine, original droschky, in which a person always looks like a schoolboy broke loose from his master, getting along as hard as the horse can fly ; or a sailor newly paid off, who wants to make a fine show on land, and get rid of his money in the shortest possible time.

It has the recommendation, however, of being easily mounted. There are neither steps to let down nor doors to fasten ; and you take your seat as readily as in an arm-chair, and are off in a twinkling. These carriages also answer remarkably well at a public drive, when the

dust is not too great, and where you want to see everything without the distraction of driving. As already stated, however, few of the better classes appear in them on occasions of show; they are used only by people in a hurry. From the great distances they have to go in this wide desert of a city, servants in gentlemen's families, porters at the public offices, &c., always have a droschky at their disposal. The man who goes on foot, therefore, is here little thought of; nor can it be expected that he should, when the cookmaid would disdain to bring her vegetables, and the errand-man his letters, without the aid of a carriage of some kind or other. There are hackney-coaches, or things very like them, to be had here; but they are dear, and seldom used, unless by those going to the country.

During this long talk about droschkies, we have got over a wide stretch of ground, crossed the Great Neva, traversed the handsome streets of the Vassilii-Ostroff, passed the bridge of the Little Neva, got through the low houses of Old St. Petersburg, and away across Nefkas and branches innumerable, till now we scarcely know where we are; somewhere among the islands of Krestofski, Ielaghine, &c., which present as gay and happy a scene as heart could wish. Nothing can be more lively and varied than the sights witnessed here in summer. Some of the islands are adorned with the acacia, birch, aspen, willow, and other trees of summer foliage; while some are still clothed with all the gloom of their native pines. Gay palaces for the royal family, and handsome carriage-drives for the nobles, adorn a few, while on others the lower classes find the ordinary means

of amusing themselves; eating-rooms, dancing-places, merry-go-rounds, wandering musicians, &c. These islands may, therefore, be said to form both the *Champs Elysées* and *Bois de Boulogne* of St. Petersburg. They are much farther away from the centre of the capital than these places are from that of Paris, but the cheapness of the droschky brings them near, as their crowded state shows.

Yet, crowded as the woods are by people of every rank, not a single act of disorder occurs. In another respect, too, these islands are far superior to the places of public resort near the French capital; in the singular life and interest given to the scenes by the branches of the river, which twine round them in most confusing but beautiful variety. The waters are constantly enlivened by gay barges, shooting past in every direction, with lofty prows, and gaudy streamers floating behind: in these, many, and generally the merriest parties, come all the way by the river; some shaded by striped awnings, some sitting unprotected, but all singing most beautifully.

Singing, in fact, is one of the great amusements on these islands; and though the Russian peasant is a most disagreeable vocalist when heard alone, nothing can be more delightful than to hear two or three of them joining in their national airs together. To the Russian, singing appears to be as natural as speaking is to other nations. The moment a stone-cutter gets the chisel in his hand, the song begins; and the *Temtchik* (postilion), in seizing the reins, strikes up his horrid melody, as regularly as if the amount of hire depended on the qualities of his

voice. Watch a party of friends returning at night : if in a boat, the oars keep time to their harmony ; if on foot, the pavement rings with their measured steps. But most of all are they musical in their droschkies. Five, six, or eight of them will crowd on one of these vehicles : how they do not all tumble off, like that bearded gentleman, or long-gowned lady, whom you see rolling in the mud not far off, is wonderful. Notwithstanding this accident, the song is not stopped—the vehicle is, perhaps, but the worthy fallen continues his song till raised by his brethren, who build themselves on again, and drive away, with a fury of voice increased by the delay.

Their love of music is well seen among the crowds on the islands. The rope-dancers—the mountebanks—the man who exhibits a live seal, which he keeps in good humour by always pouring water on its back from a tub, and rubbing it with his hand—the bird-trainer—even the man with the badger, and other exhibitors of curiosities, natural and artificial, generally have but a small ring of admirers, compared with that which hangs in breathless silence round a band of singers, or horn-players. The latter are extremely interesting, but our surprise in hearing them was less, from having previously heard so much about their skill. Not so, however, with the singing-band ; for their powers went far beyond all the ideas we had ever formed of Russian music. Those we listened to were mere peasants ; but they had an advantage over those formerly heard, in having been well taught, and thus were able to execute the most difficult passages, with an ease and a

finish that would not have disgraced a company of Italians. Indeed, the whole performance reminds one of Italian music. The very language, rough and guttural as we generally suppose it, sounds soft and musical on the lips of the natives.

These entertainments have always something dramatic. We could not, of course, understand a word of them ; but some were serious, some comic. The latter partook much of the manner of the quick and lively dialogue of the Italian *buffo comico*. The serious differed from most things of the kind we had ever heard : two or three were reciting a tale of sorrow, in which one of their number, who stood alone, was the principal party ; they were bewailing the death of his mistress. Ever and anon, when they came to some more affecting turn of the narrative, he would strike in with a plaintive exclamation, as if in the deepest grief : the others would then resume their part, and at times all would unite in a chorus, as wild and touching as a Highland Lament.

We saw on these islands almost every kind of popular amusement peculiar to the country, except that of the " Russian Mountains," which the season of course forbade. This exercise is the favourite sport in winter, when mountains of snow are formed on the Neva, down which they slide with giddy fury. From all we could hear of it, the amusement is not unlike one well known in some parts of Scotland, under the name of hurley-hacket, which, if school-day recollections can be trusted, is performed by sliding down a steep bank of sand or loose gravel, pretty much in the same attitude as that assumed by the Russians on the more slippery ice.

The variety and originality of the scenes presented in this quarter invariably kept us lingering till the latest twilight. The carriages of the nobility might be seen waiting in long files till near eleven, the more select avenues being generally crowded with fashionable loungers. Besides the summer palaces of the imperial family, these islands, and their neighbourhood on the mainland of the Carelian shore, are adorned with the pretty *datcha*, or summer villas of the nobility, scattered about in great variety of plan. The snug cottage of England may be seen side by side with the fantastic pinnacles of China. The grounds of the Strogonoff villa, which are open to the public, contain a Greek sarcophagus and other specimens of ancient art. There is a theatre also in this region, which is open only in summer, for French plays and Italian operas. Another attraction is the establishment where mineral waters of all kinds are manufactured "to order:" you may here drink the waters of Töplitz, or of Ems, of Cheltenham or of Barèges, just as the doctor or fancy may prescribe. These establishments for imitating every kind of mineral water by chemical combinations (first attempted by Dr. Struve, a celebrated chemist of Dresden) are spreading rapidly on the continent.

It is now time, however, to leave the islands. Bidding good night to the groups still dancing merrily, even at this late hour, we shall return by the longest bridge in the capital—that above the fortress. A night's rest will qualify us for new expeditions of discovery among our interesting friends of the lower classes, to whom our outdoor excursions were chiefly devoted.

CHAPTER XV.

SCENES IN THE FISH-BARGES—BATHS—BAZAARS, AND MARRIAGE MARKET.

Live Fish—Tethered sturgeon, and winter fare—Betting—Hawkers of lemonade—Russian baths—The effect of bathing on the habits, &c.—Scenes in the Gostinoï Dvor—Importunate merchants—Bargaining—The Old-clothes Mart—Old iron—Visit to the Summer Garden—How to get married.

To give a full account of *all* that struck us as remarkable in this wonderful city would only weary the reader. Where we are hourly wandering

“’Mong many things most new to ear and eye,”

a selection must be made; else attention will be exhausted, long before the narrator has got half through his tale.

Among the places, however, which do not tire in visiting—and which consequently are not likely to tire in reading of them—a few still remain to be mentioned. Of these, none better deserve attention than the FISH-BARGES, or floating-houses near the Isaac bridge, in which the finny tribes are preserved alive in great numbers. The bottom of each huge ark is occupied by square wells, each devoted to a distinct kind of fish. Here may be seen the cheap carp swimming next door to the costly sterlet (of whom more, under the head of *National Dishes*); and a few feet away from these, eels

and flounders may be seen sporting with great activity, in the perilous vicinity of a voracious, large-mouthed gentleman from the Baltic, who would give something that the plank between him and his dear friends could be removed.

But what strong-snouted fellow is this who next claims our notice? It is a huge sturgeon (*sturio huso*), swimming at large in the river, with a thick rope through his upper jaw, by which this "triton among the minnows" is kept as safe as a seventy-four struggling within the Plymouth Breakwater. The thick knot above the horny gristle keeps him so securely, that you may haul him home, and examine him at leisure. Here he comes, splashing about as formidable as a young shark, though not quite so large as the sturgeons on the American coast, which the Yankees accuse of swamping their boats; nor even like those of the mouth of the Danube, where they are sometimes found weighing 1500 lbs. Those of Lake Baïkal, where they are very numerous, are of much more moderate dimensions, seldom exceeding 200 lbs. weight.

The rope next to this one moors a smaller captive, perhaps of a different species. Poor fellows! they must lead a sad life of it, notwithstanding this seeming liberty of theirs; for every hard-hearted kitchen-wench, or more scientific but equally cruel *maître d'hôtel*, who wants a good fish to complete a dinner, has the right to tug them about at pleasure, till some one, captivated by their charms, compassionately ends their amphibious existence.

This fashion of mooring the live fish resembles a prac-

tice which is very common in Egypt ; though, in a country where there is so much ice, it cannot arise from the same cause—namely, the difficulty of preserving dead fish in summer. When the binny or barbel of the Nile is hooked, the fisherman puts a strong ring in the jaw, ties a few cords to it, and returning the fish to the river, fastens him to the shore : thus he goes over the whole file of his hooks, not one of which is unoccupied. It is only in the dog-days, however, that the fish-markets of Russia and Egypt bear any resemblance to each other. In winter the fishes of St. Petersburg need neither rope nor tank to hold them. Land-carriage, by means of sledges on the snow, being then cheap, they are brought from great distances, and in large quantities, completely frozen ; in which state they are sold much cheaper than at other seasons. Indeed, contrary to the usual rule, winter here is in some respects a season of greater plenty than summer : beef, which the heat prevents from being transported sound in summer, is then brought upon sledges from the distant provinces, and sold in its frozen state so cheap, that the peasant can allow himself a piece of it to the cabbage he has hewn from the tub with his axe.

Fishing would seem to employ a good many hands about the capital in summer. Boats of small size may be seen constantly at work in the shallow waters of the bay, and occasionally off the quays in some parts of the city, where, we believe, fishing is often made a kind of gambling concern. Before a net has been hauled in, some person in the crowd at the landing-place agrees to give so much for whatever it contains ; or two or three unite in the venture. The result of the speculation is of

course variable, there being often nothing at all for the rash gambler, though at other times a considerable sum may be realised.

Great numbers of the lower orders are employed in selling lemonade and other refreshing drinks, very essential to the pedestrian's comfort, in the warm days of July. Some of these liquors are made from cranberries and such forest dainties. The large red bottles in which the mixtures are exhibited make a most showy display, on benches near the crowded thoroughfares, where many a brawny youth, in red-striped surtout, may be seen strolling about, with his whole stock in trade slung on his back, in a portly-bellied crystal jug, half full of the tempting beverage.

The best way of all, however, to dispose of oneself in a warm day, is to visit one of their BATHS. A passion for the bath forms such a striking part of the Russian character, that we ought to have mentioned it more particularly long before now. For a Russian to live without the bath would be as impossible as for him to live without food. Ablutions are prescribed by his religion too. They are not now performed, however, in the promiscuous way described by early travellers, who speak of men and women as frequenting the bath together. We found no instance of this in any part of the empire.

At the one we visited in the capital, there was no other person in the room going through the bathing process; but, it being Saturday night, the adjoining chambers were full of customers. We had expected to find an immense open yard, or something of that kind—at least, a large hall of rude structure, ringing with the yells of

swimmers; but found the bath a handsome house, like a private dwelling, in a well-kept court-yard. An office for the clerks and superintendents is near the principal entrance, from which a broad passage runs the whole length of the building. From this passage doors open on either hand into sunk apartments of different sizes, paved with clean flagstones, and often with marble. On entering one of these, the heat was so great, that it seemed wonderful how the human frame could endure it.

“Where are the baths, though?” asked the simple foreigner: “There is no water here, and how can a man bathe without water?”

In Russia, kind reader, when you go to take a bath, you are plunged, not into *water*, as you had fondly expected, but into *vapour*. The patient, having duly stripped in an adjoining room, is seated by the man in attendance on the lowest of a range of steps, running round the whole of the generally oval chamber, and rising like a stair towards the ceiling. Here he sits patiently, though at first most uncomfortably—for he fears the heat will suffocate him—going through all the rubbings, and strainings, and knucklings, which the operator thinks fit to inflict. It is necessary to rise from step to step, in order to reach an always increasing degree of heat, which, instead of being unpleasant, has now become quite delightful, the oppressive feeling having gone off as soon as the perspiration broke freely out. In fact, the sensation is now so pleasant, that the bather is willing enough to remain. Hitherto the process has been in general not unlike the Turkish bath; but the scourging

with birch rods, which ere long begins, is very different from both the Turkish and English ideas of *scourging* and of *birch* : it is one of the most pleasant and original devices in the whole process. But when the truly Russian *finale* comes—the sousing with ice-cold water, while you are still melting with heat—the poor stranger is completely startled ; for a moment he loses all sensation—but, that moment over, he feels a glow of comfort, of which no language could give an idea.

The heat of a Russian bath is seldom lower than 100°, nor higher than 200° of Fahrenheit. A beginner remains only twenty minutes in the place, but the experienced visitor tarries more than twice as long. The assistants rub the body with soap, bran, &c. during a great part of the time, and often pour cold water on the head, or tie a wet towel round it. In the houses of the nobles, the baths are most luxuriously fitted up, and a considerable part of the household have no other duties than to minister to this part of their master's enjoyments. In such private baths it is customary to drink largely of some cold, but not intoxicating liquid, after the process ; but we saw nothing of this in the public ones. In country villages the common bath is generally a very rude affair—a mere shed by the river, into which the peasants plunge immediately after exposing themselves to the first part of the cleansing operation.

The stranger, of course, pays high for a bath—seldom less than three roubles ; and for an ordinary bath, with water, &c., five. To the lower orders, however, it costs but a mere trifle, though they have not yet quite brought it down to the classic standard of ancient Rome, where a

bath cost only about half an English penny (a *quadrans*, or fourth part of an *as*).

As to the boasted effects which this bath—or rather the habit of bathing in this way—is said to have in bracing the frame, making the Russians hardy, &c., they are all imaginary. Instead of bracing the frame, this habit enervates and undermines it most rapidly. Look at the Russian women, and you will soon see its good effects—they are old before their time. As iron glowing hot is tempered by being plunged into water, so, the advocates for Russian bathing assert, is the body hardened by the process just described. But so far from the sudden transition helping to temper the frame, and render it more fit to stand the cold of winter, experience shows that it only makes it *more sensitive*. The peasant may not wear much dress in winter, because he cannot afford it, but he puts on all he can get; while his master, as every body knows, *burdens* himself with coverings.

Those who think the Russians hardy, because they make long journeys through the snow, forget how a Russian travels: he is built up in a close machine, buried among beds and blankets enough for a whole household. The only hardy people in Russia are the lowest of the peasants and soldiers, who, from constant exposure, become nearly frost-proof. A Russian gentleman is not half so hardy as an Englishman. It is notorious that the English, though brought up in so mild a climate, when they come here, endure the terrible cold of Russia—a cold intense beyond all our ideas of winter—much better than the Russians themselves. A Russian nobleman who had an English tutor in his family

told us that when he himself could scarcely cross the threshold, even in his loads of fur and wool, his friend was frisking happily about, with nothing but a light great-coat added to his usual dress, and tantalising him every time they met, by telling him that it was a fine day—a *very* fine day! And so it is with all Englishmen on first arriving here—but only *at first*; for, after they have had a year or two of the bath, to which they become as much addicted as the Russians, they are forced to wear as many wrappings as their neighbours. That the bath has an enervating influence is evident from the habits of Russians, even in the milder climates of France and Italy, where they may be seen in their furs, when the natives are satisfied with their ordinary dress. In short, their early and constant use of the bath is as injurious to the *body* as it is to the MORALS of the Russians; but on this latter subject we do not deem it expedient to enter.

Neither is the bath such a promoter of cleanliness as some allege. Those who pretend that the Russian gets such a scrubbing every week as the Englishman does not get in his whole life, thereby insinuating that the former is more cleanly than the latter, forget that this weekly bath is an excuse with the Russian for indulging in the greatest habitual filthiness. The Englishman, who employs soap and water so copiously as to surprise the hydrophobic nations of the continent, and is satisfied with a *moderate* use of the ordinary bath, is the only clean and cleanly animal in the world.

There is still another place, however, which the stranger ought to visit, and often, if he wish to become

acquainted with the manners of the people :—the **BAZAAR**, or *Gostinoï Dvor*, where the Russian shopkeepers are seen in the greatest perfection.

In their long beards, blue robes, and lofty caps, the tenants of this singular mart might pass for Jews ; but they are all genuine, unadulterated Russkys. The place our friends have to operate in is a vast square, with arcades opening to the numerous streets, and alleys dividing it at different points, all occupied by small shops, some for jewellery, some for cutlery, with others for army-clothiers, grocers, stationers, upholsterers, mercers, &c. In short, there is a little, or rather a large town of shops here, which it would take a day to explore. Some of the neighbouring streets are also filled with shops. A journey through this place is sooner described than made. Some days the merchants are very quiet, each merely opening his door, and bowing most winningly to tempt the stranger in. At other times, when, from seeing him repeat his visits, they begin to think something may be made of the stranger, he is beset with importunate shopmen the moment he appears. A bearded fellow thrusts himself in your way, and launches forth in an harangue about the quality of his goods. But lo ! another has scented the prey from afar. You are too respectable a customer to be given up without a struggle. Fortunately, they soon begin to fight with each other, and you escape in the storm of winged words. Sometimes, however, a man in the fervour of his importunity actually lays violent hands upon you, till it becomes impossible to escape without leaving the skirt of your polluted garment as a trophy of his zeal.

Should you be wiled into any shop, be sure that at least double the value is asked for every article. This disposition of the Russians to ask too much for every thing imposes caution on the stranger who would bargain with them. It is this well-known part of their character that has made so many pronounce them a nation of rogues and sharpers. They evidently have no pleasure in selling an article without first having a fight about it. We had many instances of this, but none more striking than that with a hawker, who had waited on a gentleman at our lodgings with a bundle of those velvet dressing-gowns, of which it is now the fashion for every stranger to carry home some. After disposing of a few of the larger ones, there was still question about a smaller one, for which thirty roubles were asked, and twenty offered. Day after day the Russian came to see whether more would be given, but in vain ; the customer knew that he had offered the full value, and would be sure to get it at last. For a time the importunate merchant was not seen ; but the very morning of the stranger's departure, the first man he saw in the street was his friend of the dressing-gown, hastening, when he heard of the intended flight, to offer him the disputed article at his own, or at any price. The rule of the Russian merchant is, never to lose a customer for the shame of being thought a rogue : rather than let him go, he will give the article for any thing that has been offered. At one of the shops a pair of shoes, for which eleven roubles were first asked, were finally given for three and a half.

Of all the surrounding bazaars in the vicinity of the large one, the *Marché aux poux*, or Old-Clothes Market,

is by far the most amusing. The ragged store displayed here is as undefinable as the crowd. In no other part of St. Petersburg have we seen so many women of the lower classes assembled; some pricing a petticoat of ancient date, some buying a gown with as many holes as spots, and some carrying off a shift, of which one-half is bidding adieu to the other. Here a posse of soldiers are holding a council of war over a pair of superannuated trousers; a little farther on a poor bargeman is sighing over the departed glories of a moth-eaten sheepskin. There is no finery here. In the old-clothes marts of other capitals many a gaudy sight may be seen—silks, ribbons, and frippery, once as gay as life, which they now seem to mock; but, in the St. Petersburg fair, misery is misery: it comes to this market in rags, undisguised, unpretending, and finds nothing but rags to cover it.

The market for old iron, near this, is also worthy of a glance. Such a collection of rusty articles was never made before, since iron was first dug from the mine; old nails, old screws, old hammers, hinges, anchors,—old things of all kinds that ever iron was used for. The only puzzle is to find names and uses for half of them.

But the reader must now be wearied of our walks through St. Petersburg, and perhaps of the low company we have been keeping. If he ask why we have all this time said so little of the well-dressed throng, we would tell him that the manners and appearance of the better classes being now pretty much the same in every country, he who would form a correct idea of the national character of a people must, while amongst them, forsake at times the drawing-rooms of the great, and visit the

market, the workshop, the kennel, the place of every day as well as that of holiday resort. Unless he follow this plan, he might as well have stayed at home. Travelling will teach him nothing new; show him nothing to remember.

To please the fastidious, however, we shall take a turn as far as the celebrated Summer Garden. There is no vulgarity here; the ladies are all in satin shoes, and the beaux in kid gloves. There are flowers to sweeten the air after the musty places we have been in; long alleys of trees to keep away the sun, and a goodly assemblage of statues to honour us with their silent admiration. In fact, for those who prefer such places to the haunts we have been wandering through, this is a most appropriate retreat. The handsome iron railing towards the river, regarded as one of the finest things of the kind in Europe, most effectually excludes the vulgar. But, for our own parts—there is no accounting for taste—in place of sauntering through the throng of affectation and pretence generally assembled here, we should prefer visiting these gardens on the famous fête of the 26th of May,—when the girls of the middle classes are brought out to catch husbands.

This is one of the most singular usages we have ever met with. The Russians call it the *Inspection* or *Show of young Girls*. Regularly as the first days of summer return, all the young women who have not got husbands are paraded here by their parents, each in her best dress and best looks. Bachelors, young and old, enter the alleys, with cautious step and anxious eye—glide in silence through the files of beauty ranged thick on each

side—see some one whom they like better than others—stand awhile—go away—come back—and take another look ; then, if the honoured fair one still please, the victim ends by making proposals. To whom ? To the young lady to be sure, guesses some impatient youth—but he guesses wrong. Such indelicacy is never heard of in Russia. A man to make love for himself would be contrary to nature ; that is, to Russian nature, which is quite a different thing from human nature every where else. It is to the parents, then, that he addresses himself ? No such thing ! The unhappy reader is still wide of the mark. They manage these things very differently in Russia. A gentleman who intends taking a wife, employs some old hag from a class of women who live by match-making. He tells her what funds he has, what he is employed in, what he expects from his friends ; and, naming the fair one whom his eyes have chosen, begs that she will explain all these matters, not to *her*, but to her family. This go-between, this most unclassical Proxenate, whose wages are as regularly fixed as the per-centages of a broker, enters on her mission in due form. Explanations are given on both sides ; friends are consulted ; negotiations of the most formal nature are carried on. Diplomacy is nothing to it. From unforeseen objections about prospects or dowry, the explanations of the high contracting parties often become as tedious as Belgian protocols. Months, in fact, may be spent on these preliminaries ; but all this time the poor damsel has had no voice in the matter. She has not seen her intended ; they have never met so long as to whisper a stolen vow to each other. There will be time

enough for the unimportant process of becoming acquainted, when their fate has been irrevocably fixed. What have such silly considerations as like or dislike to do with marriage? In choosing a wife, it is a beast of burden, a domestic drudge, that the Russian wants, not a rational companion—an equal. Were he to consult his affections in selecting his spouse, could he have the pleasure of beating her whenever he feels inclined?

Married women in the middle ranks appear to lead a most listless existence. Without education, and, by the jealous usages of the country, almost prohibited from taking exercise, their chief occupation seems to consist in leaning over the window all day long, with their elbows resting on cushions, and sometimes a poodle dog on each side.

We have now done with the vulgar of St. Petersburg. The title of next chapter challenges the reader to higher game.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIGHER CLASSES—THEIR INCOMES AND MUNIFICENCE—EMPEROR'S TREATMENT OF TRAVELLING BEAUTIES—ABUSE OF SOME TITLES.

Witty account of the Russian capital—Difference between the Russian and English nobility—A man valued by the number of his serfs—Sources of income in Russia—Land—Manufactures—Mines—Flocks—Large fortunes—The Cheremetieffs—Demidoffs, &c. —The Countess R—— and her sheep—Extent of Russian properties—Compared with that of a Scottish estate—The wealthy Count Woronzoff—His munificence—Anecdote of him—Nobles not allowed to spend too much of their fortunes abroad—Russian ladies marrying foreigners—Intimacy between Russian and English gentlemen—Style of dressing—Abuse of the title of “Prince”—Hundreds bearing it—Abundance of “Generals”—The apothecary made a general—Privileges of a uniform—Use of epaulettes—Edinburgh archer—Disputes about precedence rendered impossible.

P—L L——N's saying about St. Petersburg is worthy of being recorded. When asked what he thought of his native capital, he replied, with true Russian contempt for everything Russian, and with a depth of discrimination worthy of one who had graduated in the Exclusive and Brummell schools of England, “There are but two places in the world where a man can live—London and Paris. St. Petersburg is but a large country village.”

This (though not quite new) was excellent, to be said of a place with 400,000 inhabitants. But there was truth as well as wit in the response of the youthful philosopher. In spite of all its splendour and extent, St.

Petersburg is but a village. Of mere bulk, wealth, population, it has enough; but it wants the indescribable something which makes the capitals of France and England the capitals also of the intellect and fashion of Europe.

This assertion would be amply confirmed by a sketch of the state of society here: but this task must be left to more experienced pens; *we* had neither time nor opportunity to become acquainted with more than its surface. It is here proposed to mention merely a few general facts, not so much with the view of giving a complete picture of the better classes, as to show some of the differences between them and those of England.

In England, a man's worth depends on the number of pounds sterling which he has of yearly income; but in Russia, the question that decides the degree of estimation in which a man shall be held, is, "How many slaves have you?" The number of these once known, the person's value is easily turned into money. Thus, in ordinary hands, each peasant is worth so many roubles a-year; you have but to multiply by that standard, and in a trice you have the annual income. There is always a wide additional allowance made, however, above the strict sum, on the complimentary supposition that the party in question is skilful at grinding the poor wretches, and so will extort a good deal more than an ordinary person. Happy he, then, who can boast of his thousands of slaves; he is the envied, the courted, the successful; while the man who has few is as little thought of as a country curate or a younger son. "I have no slaves," said a nobleman of our acquaintance, from the

German frontier, to a Russian prince, who had been paying him great attention since his arrival in the capital ; “ slaves are unknown in my country.” The look of contempt from his interrogator could not have been more cutting had he said, “ I am a slave myself.” From that night he was never taken the least notice of by his princely host. Who would ask to his balls or his dinners “ a man of nothing,” who not only had no slaves, but also wanted tact to conceal his forlorn condition ?

There are some families, such as the Cheremetieffs and Stroganoffs, who possess between forty and fifty thousand serfs. One hundred thousand is the largest number we ever heard ascribed to one family. These, however, are the most colossal fortunes. Even one thousand is looked upon as a very respectable share ; the man who can boast of this round number is *somebody*. We never heard any estimate of the average value of each slave, but were told that a household of the most ordinary kind may bring about 100 roubles (4*l.*) a-year. The household of a serf occupying a farm is of course worth a great deal more to the proprietor : so that, taking the average of the two classes of serfs together, the annual worth of each family may be calculated at 5*l.* of our money ; which, allowing six persons to each household, and, consequently, dividing the whole population on his estate by that number, would give the income of a nobleman possessing one thousand serfs, as approaching to 840*l.* a-year.

In addition to their income from this source, many of the wealthiest families possess large revenues from manufactories of various kinds. Not a few, also, draw im-

menſe ſums from their mines. The name of Demidoff, ſo long an object of intereſt to the travelling crowd in Italy, will at once be recalled, in connexion with the branch laſt named. This family is one of the neweſt in the empire; little more than a hundred years ago its founder was but a poor blackſmith. Peter the Great, being highly pleaſed with ſome muſkets, halberds, and other weapons, which he had executed in a way very ſuperior to any which had hitherto been made in Ruſſia, gave his humble friend a grant of land near Moſcow, thereby enabling him to eſtabliſh forges on an extenſive ſcale. Theſe ſucceeded ſo well, that he ſoon after was preſented with large territories in Siberia, the iron and other mines of which continue ſo productive, that the family now enjoys revenues equal to thoſe of the higheſt among the Engliſh nobility. Their platina mines are the moſt valuable known in the world. So abundantly have jewels been found on ſome parts of their property, that on the nights when the old count uſed to receive company in Florence, it was no uncommon thing to ſee gems on his tables to the value of 400,000*l*.

Some families in the ſouth of Ruſſia draw immense revenues from their lands and flocks. The Counteſs R——, whoſe eſtates we traversed near Pultava, poſſeſſes 60,000 merino ſheep, and 100,000 deciatines of land, which make about 270,000 imperial acres, or very nearly the ſize of the county of Radnor (272,640 acres). The counteſs has been long abroad, but has recently got a hint (the emperor's hints are ſomewhat peremptory) to return and look after her ſheep. Large, however, as her property is, it does not come near that of the terri-

tories of some of the Scottish nobility—for it would be unjust to compare Russian estates with the compact and highly-cultivated properties of English landowners. The property of the Dukes of Gordon, for example, in the counties of Banff, Moray, Aberdeen, and Inverness, covered 422,000 acres, or 22,000 acres more than the whole county of Hertford. If to this be added the estates to which they succeeded on the Dee, they will be found to have possessed in all considerably more than 550,000 acres, or *three times* the size of the county of Middlesex (179,590 acres). The estates of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, in Scotland, also surpass in extent those of the great families of Russia.

While speaking of the more wealthy of the Russian nobles, we must not omit Count Woronzoff, the most popular man in Russia, and the master of revenues that would entitle him to rank with some of the crowned heads of Germany, his paternal income having been greatly increased by the large fortune of his wife. At Odessa, where he resides as governor of New Russia, he maintains all the splendour, without the constraint, of a court. When he visits the Crimea, he daily entertains some hundreds at his table; and he is building a palace near Sebastopol, which will cost 300,000*l*.

While he was commander of the Russian armies in France, the officers, as Russian officers always do, lived so extravagantly, that, when the army was about to be withdrawn, bills were brought against them to a much greater amount than they were able to discharge. The count heard of the business; but the sum was so great that it startled him. The honour of Russia, however,

was at stake : to leave a foreign country with such claims unsatisfied would for ever stamp the national character with infamy. There was no alternative but at once to give an order on the military chest for the whole amount.

He reached St. Petersburg, expecting a cordial reception from Alexander and his ministers ; but was disappointed. For a time there was nothing but coldness. He had not yet seen the emperor ; but at last was sent for, and a hint given that he had exceeded his powers, in making such an unprecedented use of the public money. His answer was worthy of a Roman : " I thought to please your majesty by saving the honour of Russia : I calculated wrong ; but atone for the error by this scrap of paper. My banker will refund the whole amount to the Minister of Finance." It was an order for 50,000*l*.

A man capable of making such a sacrifice could not long continue a favourite at court. His character, however, was too highly appreciated by the country at large—and especially by the army—to enable the government to dispense with him altogether. They were at last compelled to give him *carte blanche*, in order to keep his friendship ; and his answer was, that they must either give him his present government or nothing. He has since been offered that of Moscow, as of higher rank, but declined it.

The character of the count is interesting to Englishmen, from the circumstance that he is himself nearly half English. Besides having a sister married to an English nobleman, he spent the best part of his youth

amongst us, at one of our public schools ; and is thus as well acquainted with England as any peer of the realm. The conduct we have related does no discredit to his training.

Another instance of his munificence occurred on a more recent occasion. Knowing that the true way to prevent speculation in government offices is to pay respectably those employed in them, he annually distributes the whole of his salary as Governor-General (50,000 roubles, or 2000*l.*) among the secretaries and clerks employed under him. The count having had occasion to visit England a few years since, a substitute was appointed till his return, who drew all the emoluments of the office, but, being of limited fortune, was not able to show the same liberality to his subordinates. This diminution of income occasioned great embarrassment to those who had hitherto trusted to their patron's bounty ; but no sooner did the count hear of the circumstance, than he generously ordered that the usual amount should be paid to each out of his private fortune, in order that none connected with him might suffer even a temporary inconvenience by his absence.*

The emperor takes good care, however, that the fortunes of his subjects shall not be all spent abroad. No

* No one who knows anything of the beautiful "system" in Russia, will be surprised to hear that, since the above remarks on Count Woronzoff's character were written, he has fallen under the emperor's displeasure, and is now on a visit in England. There are countries where it is dangerous to be honest ! It also appears from statements in the German newspapers, published while these pages are passing through the press, that the whole of his secretaries and clerks have been dismissed from the public employment.

Russian is allowed to remain more than five years in foreign countries ;—so that the empire does not suffer to any perceptible extent from the system of absenteeism which oppresses England. It is also free from another English affliction : ladies of fortune are not allowed to marry foreigners ; at least, if they do so, they must bring their captive knights *to live in Russia*. This is a practical lesson which we might take with much advantage from that country. The Englishwomen whom we see wedding themselves to misery in France and Italy would be more cautious in their choice, were they compelled to bring Monsieur Le Comte, or Il Signor Marchese, home amongst their English friends. They now throw themselves away, on the principle that so long as they remain among strangers, there is none to reproach them with their folly ; and, when the worst comes, they know that heart-break and shame will be less galling, where no friend of happier years is by, to remind them of what they were and might still have been. A little of the Russian discipline would most effectually prevent all this.

The gallant emperor, we have said, has too tender a regard for his fair subjects to leave them entirely to their own discretion ; and, as an example of it, we may state that, the other day, when the wealthy Countess S—— wished to give her hand to Prince Butera, a Neapolitan nobleman, formerly well known as a member of the diplomatic corps at Paris, the answer of her imperial guardian was, “ I have no objection to the match, but the prince must live in Russia ; ”—which his excellency very wisely consented to do. The King of Naples has

also gained by the bargain ; the prince, in return for the honour of being nominated his majesty's permanent ambassador, having agreed to discharge the duties of the office without any salary.

It is a singular fact, that notwithstanding the extreme difference between the institutions of Russia and those of England, there are no foreigners with whom Englishmen associate more cordially than with Russians. In liberality, indifference about expense, and readiness to make a sacrifice for their friend, they come nearer to ourselves than any other of the continental nations. They are the only body of men abroad to whom our term "gentlemanly" can be applied.

Without diving for profound reasons to account for this favourable feeling on the part of the English, we may state one which, though by no means of a very deep nature, is yet not without its weight with Englishmen—namely, that, generally speaking, the Russian nobles are the best-dressed men of the whole continent. The Germans and French are over-dressed ; the Italians—except the few who dance attendance on the English families at Florence and Naples—don't dress at all ; but the Russians keep a happy medium, dressing in a plain manly style, like people of sense at home. Even the clerks in public offices are noticeable in this respect.

Having fallen on the subject of dress, we ought to state, once for all, before leaving it, that the Russian ladies wear the last month's Parisian fashions, but always exaggerated. For instance, their *bustles*—or whatever else those mysterious structures ought to be termed—are large enough for camels to dance upon.

We were amused, and, at first, greatly puzzled, with the frequency of the title of "prince." Every second carriage we met was that of Prince somebody or other. We soon began to find out, however, that to be a prince here is no great distinction. Though many wealthy people enjoy it, the title is often held by those who are distinguished by little else than this "handle" to their name. It is nothing more than the mistranslation of a Tartar word. All who bear it are of that race, and it is assumed by every member of any family in which it has been transmitted. The original term was certainly descriptive of some kind of rank, but had a meaning very different from the idea we attach to its substitute. "To be a prince in Russia," said a friend, "is scarcely reputable. For one rich man who bears the title, there are thousands who have it in beggary. In some towns—Odessa, for instance—you may see princes at every door, without a rouble in their pockets."

In this way, one meets with twenty Prince M.'s and Prince P.'s, before falling on the right one. "Prince Galitzin is to be of the party where you dine to-night," was an announcement which overjoyed us; for we had heard much of him many-a-day since in Paris, and anticipated much information and pleasure from his company. But it was not *the* prince; our prince turned out to be an *employé* in some government office.

Owing, probably, to its vulgarity, "prince" is not known as a title in the imperial family: the sons and brothers of the emperor have the title of "grand-duke;" which is the more distinguished, from the fact that here no subject ever bears the title of "duke."

There is another distinction, however, whose frequency puzzled us nearly as much as that now spoken of—that of “general.” We had heard several people, distinguished neither by warlike looks nor warlike dress, spoken of as generals. One man, in particular, quite routed our philosophy—a shabby little creature, with scarcely bone enough to carry a sword, far less to wield it, was always addressed as *Monsieur le General*; but still, as the young officers who were of the party treated him with very little deference, we could reconcile neither his bearing nor their conduct with our English ideas of the dignity to be expected from a man addressed by such a high military appellation, and of the respect due to him from juniors in the service. At length the mystery was cleared up: the poor old man was a director of some theatre, and held the title by gift of the emperor, as many do without ever having been in the army. If we mistake not, it may be purchased; at all events it is lavished in a way which makes it perfectly worthless when not coupled with military rank. We heard of an apothecary who is a general; and, for all we know to the contrary, the empress’s man-midwife may be a lieutenant-colonel. In short, these military honours are distributed with a freedom truly ridiculous. Russians themselves smile at it. Among the lower orders, however, these things, with their accompanying ribbons, excite great awe.

This circumstance, of military rank commanding so much reverence, will explain why a penniless lieutenant, with nothing but his epaulettes, will get horses at the post when he is travelling, without a moment’s delay, when a merchant who has thousands must wait for hours.

The respect paid to a uniform is, in fact, so great, that we have heard of travellers pinning a bunch of gold-lace to their shoulders, in order to strike awe into the post-masters and servants, the latter of whom are kicked and driven about in grand style by the gentlemen in *real* military dress. Some foreigners have found it advisable to sport epaulettes even in the capital, as well as in travelling. A gentleman who was connected with the English embassy, during our visit to St. Petersburg, finding that, in his visits with Lord Durham to the camp, he was sometimes treated with less respect than others of his standing, began to meditate how he might best remedy the evil. His case seemed a desperate one, for he had never served even in the militia, as other diplomatists have done, nor could he assume the handsome uniform of deputy-lieutenant. But at length he happily bethought himself that he was a member of the Scottish Archers' Club, whose uniform, with a little aid from lace, &c., can be made warlike enough to impose on a Russian sentinel. This accordingly he resolved to sport, and ever after, on public occasions, in going to court or camp, it procured him all the honours of a British general.

To the *first* class of nobility very few belong; perhaps only two, one of whom is Prince Paskevitch, who humbled the Persians, and is now helping to keep the Poles enslaved. Very singularly, some of the orders have *no members*: thus, of the eleventh and thirteenth, none are alive. Though *titles* are hereditary, there is no *rank*, except what the emperor confers. A man may be prince or count by birth, yet a general of the emperor's creation takes precedence before him: he has a title, but no rank.

The classes of nobility in Russia are singularly numerous—in all, fourteen!

At one time, the Russian nobles were exposed to continual feuds among themselves, about place, precedence, &c., in consequence of some ancient usages comprehended under the general name of *mestnichestvo*, “placeship;” but the Tzar Foedor Alexeïevitch (who possessed such extraordinary talents for governing, that, had he lived, he might have done even greater things for Russia than his brother and successor, Peter the Great), put an end to these disputes by a very ingenious and summary proceeding. Having assembled all the nobles and boyars at Moscow, he made an harangue, setting forth the evils that had arisen to the empire from their dangerous quarrels; he then committed to the flames, in their presence, the whole of the *razriad*, or “arrangement,” which was a roll containing the titles and facts on which each family founded its pretensions. It was impossible for them to fight about claims of which no evidence was any longer in existence. Before this time, no member of an ancient family could be put under the command of one belonging to a family which stood lower on the roll; but now all the nobles are equal, none having any privileges beyond those which are common to the whole order.

CHAPTER XVII.

AMUSEMENTS OF THE NOBLES—PASSION FOR TRAVEL —TASTE FOR LANGUAGES.

Russians seldom ride—Rural sports unknown—Fond of gambling—The theatre—The emperor and his dancers—Passion for travel—Difference between English and Russian travellers—English travelling inconsistencies—Russians not devoid of patriotism—Their quickness in acquiring languages—Apathy of the English in this study—The Englishman and his Italian master—His German professor—Russians very attentive to their native tongue.

THE Russian nobility have none of that taste for out-of-door exercises which constitute so large a share of the amusements of the higher classes in England. In winter they have abundance of sledge-driving; but in summer, if they come out at all, it is in their carriages. We saw only one lady on horseback all the time we were here; and even the gentlemen are rarely seen riding, compared with those of other countries. In little Berlin, where the passion for this kind of exercise is carried farther than in any other continental capital, more fine riding-horses may be seen in a day than the large St. Petersburg will turn out in a week. We scarcely recollect seeing so much as a servant mounted during the whole of our journey in the interior, and certainly not one gentleman after leaving Moscow.

Rural sports are unknown. They wonder what pleasure a nobleman can have in trudging out to shoot partridges,

or stalk red-deer. They leave such pursuits to the men whom they can scourge if the larder be ill-supplied. In fact, "country amusements"—a phrase which calls up so many delightful images to the Englishman—has no place in the Russian vocabulary.

The want of all taste of this kind accounts for many peculiarities in the character and habits of the Russians. Having no occupations of an active kind, they fill up their time with sensual and pernicious amusements. Instead of spending their forenoons among books, in the fields, or in visiting their neighbours, they waste day after day in gambling. This vice is fatal to many of them. Nowhere does it exist in such violence, or to such a ruinous extent, as here. In the army, officers make it almost their constant occupation. Even in other countries a Russian may always be recognised by his passion for play.

The drama is in great favour with the higher ranks, as is well shown by the many large and handsome theatres scattered through the capital. The opera, both Italian and German, is always well frequented. The ballet corps is said to be scarcely inferior to that of Vienna. We mention these things, however, chiefly as giving an opportunity for reminding the reader that, in foreign countries, such frivolities are looked upon as matters of the very utmost importance. In England, happily, they are left to the few; on the continent they engross the thoughts and the time of all. Even the old king of Prussia occupies himself about the movements of a ballet as anxiously as about those of an army; and, will it be believed that here the emperor, who finds time for

everything, has actually been at immense pains in drilling the public dancers,—having condescended to give instructions himself to the leaders of the female regiment in the *Revolt of the Seraglio*. He is frequently behind the scenes, and always visits the stage between the acts.

The larger theatres being shut for repairs, as twenty other places were, during the greater part of our stay we had no opportunity of seeing any but the *Michael-ofski* theatre, which is quite new, and one of the handsomest theatres we have ever seen. The arrangement is entirely different from that of all other similar places that we are acquainted with; the greater part of the pit being occupied by rows of handsome arm-chairs, while a few ranges of seats, covered with red velvet cushions, sweep round the edge. The whole is so clean and well-arranged that the pit looks more like a private drawing-room than a place of indiscriminate resort. Part of the conduct of the audience, however, did not exactly accord with our ideas of drawing-room behaviour: we allude to the proceedings of the young officers present, who amused us by the assiduity which they displayed in dressing their hair before the audience; each, on entering, took out his pocket-comb, and plied it most vigorously.*

There are so few associations of a pleasant or romantic nature to link Russians with home, that we cannot wonder

* Admission to these places is so dear that none but respectable people can attend. A ticket to the boxes at the summer French theatre, in the Kammennoi-Ostroff, costs 30 roubles (near 25 shillings); and at the Alexandra theatre, which was open before we left, the prices are said to be as long as the title of the *Königlich-grossbritannisch-Hannöverische Kammer Sängerin* who was delighting the public as the Countess, in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*.

at the great love which they have for foreign travel. Three months of sunshine to nine of snow would justify any man for longing after other lands. Let a Russian wander where he may, every change is for the better.

The English have the travelling mania as well as the Russians: yet in nothing is the difference between their characters more strikingly seen than in this point of seeming resemblance; for no two nations differ more widely in their conduct when abroad. The Russian travels to forget, the Englishman to be reminded of, his native country. At every step the Russian finds something *better* than in Russia: the Englishman, at every hour, meets something which he pronounces *worse* than ever was seen in England. The Russian courts the society of foreigners, and for the moment adopts entirely the manners of the country he is in: an Englishman frequents only his own countrymen, and prides himself in keeping up his national habits. The Russian is delighted with all he sees—has never beheld anything equal to it: an Englishman abuses all that surrounds him in his new element;—scenery, palaces, women,—earth, and sky,—are nothing to those at home.

“How delightful this French cooking is!” exclaims the long-named fur-merchant who never left the Neva before. “Who would live in a country where a man can’t get even a slice of decent toast?” says plain John from Whitechapel.

“What charming things these French beds are!” sighs the one. “What monsters!” roars the other: “they actually are not ashamed to say that they never saw a four-posted bed in their lives! I’ve slept all my

life in a four-posted bed, and shan't at this time o' day put my head into a cat's cradle to please any man. Mind, landlord, I'm off—I won't stay another night in your house unless you get a f-o-u-r-post bed."

Or, taking a higher sphere of society: "What a delightful place this Paris is!" says my lady countess: "what gloves, what lace, what everything compared with our vile St. Petersburg!" "It is impossible to live in this horrid France!" exclaims her English friend: "I'm quite sure they send all their good gloves and slippers to London, for here I never get one to stay on—they can't so much as make a pin that will hold five minutes!"

A Russian surrounds himself with everything that can make him forget home: an Englishman is miserable unless everything about him be from his own country. English politics, English fashions, English quarrels, and English scandal, are as abundant in the *Cascade* at Florence as in the Pump-room at Bath. The Englishman literally "drags at each remove a lengthening chain;" the farther away from his home, the more he thinks of it: but his northern friend never recalls his, except as the country whence he derives his income, till the emperor's order too significantly admonishes him that he is a Russian. In all this he deserves at least the palm of consistency: he spends as much as possible of his time abroad, because he thinks every country better than Russia. The Englishman also stays years away, but all the time his heart is in England—there is no land like his own.

On this head, it will be seen, we differ entirely from the gallant marquis who has lately favoured the public

with his interesting “ *Recollections of a Tour in the North of Europe.*” He therein states that all with whom **he** conversed appeared to “ have a very great disinclination to the conquest of new dominions ;” and from thence infers, that it is unjust to accuse the nobles of being so passionately fond of other countries. But was his lordship—the fêted of the court, the *friend* of the emperor—in the best position for hearing the *real* sentiments of those with whom he mingled? The Russian nobles know when to speak and when to hold their tongue. They have more tact than to have rudely disturbed the noble stranger’s dream of admiration. It would soon be seen that the emperor had resolved to send his English guest away with the most favourable impression of all things Russian ; and every courtier would therefore vie with his neighbour in the struggle who should best deserve the emperor’s smiles. Not one murmur against the existing order of things—not even one little sigh for a more genial clime, would be heard from the well-disciplined throng that fluttered around him. Plain-speaking has never been proverbial for haunting courts ; and of all the courts in Europe, that of St. Petersburg is the last where it will seek to intrude.

In making these remarks it is by no means intended to throw any suspicion on the fidelity of the Marquis of Londonderry’s statements. On the contrary, we are persuaded that he has most faithfully represented all that came under his notice. What we mean is, that he was in the very worst possible position for learning the real state of public opinion among the nobles. His intimacy with the emperor, we repeat, would of itself be sufficient

to give a false tone to the representations of all who opened their lips to him.

Let it not be thought, however, that we accuse the Russians of want of patriotism. It is what we may term the *physical* disadvantages of Russia that make them roam so fondly to more favoured climes. Their affection for their country may not be of the same warm kind as ours, but that they have patriotism, in the truest sense of the word, was well manifested at the time of Napoleon's invasion. In other parts of Europe he too often found willing tools among the native nobles. In Germany, how many were forward to betray their country—how readily did the needy flock round him! But it should for ever be remembered, to the honour of the Russians, that when the conqueror of Europe came amongst them, not one joined him, or bade him welcome.

But, to resume our contrast. An Englishman looks forward to travelling, if he think of it at all, as something he must go through some day or other, not from choice, but from necessity—the dire necessity, namely, of being *like other people*. If it were not the *fashion*, the great mass of our wandering countrymen would stay at home. Not so with the Russian: from the first hour that he can think for himself, a journey abroad is the great theme of his thoughts. His early life is a constant course of preparation for it. He begins with languages, and having his heart in the study, advances to a proficiency truly surprising. The young Russian knows what he is to do with his French or Italian, and therefore acquires them rapidly: an Englishman sees no advantage in such acquirements; cannot imagine what possible use there is in

tormenting himself with any modern tongue but his own, and therefore never retains what his master attempts to cram him with. When reminded that foreign languages, if they gain no other advantage, will at least be useful in foreign countries, he replies that it will be time enough to think of them when the evil is unavoidable—that is, when actually in those countries. But before he has made up his mind to go abroad, he is too old, or too indolent, to learn one word of a new tongue. It is therefore the rarest thing possible to meet an Englishman who can speak a foreign language decently: his courier saves him the trouble; picking his pocket, too, so politely, that he is in perfect amazement at “that man’s economy.”

The aversion of the English to study foreign languages, even when abroad, is now so well known in every country they go to, that each nation has some standing joke against us on the subject. The people of Rome, for instance, take great delight in telling of an Englishman who hired a master to teach him Italian, but soon found it so troublesome, that he always took care not to be out of bed when the punctual professor came at ten for the lesson, and never acquired more of the language than just enough to be able to drawl from his pillow, “*Doppodomani, alle undeci,*” “The day after to-morrow, at eleven;” which was sure to be repeated every time the intrusive tap was heard.

The Germans improve on this, or at least on a fact which actually happened to an accomplished theologian, now filling one of the highest chairs in Prussia. A young Englishman of fortune, staying at Berlin, engaged him for lessons in German. For a day or two a yawn-

ing attention was paid to the matter in hand ; but the *lessons* soon improved into *breakfasts*. “ Cutlets and champagne to-day, Herr Professor,” said the noble student, “ *provided* —— :” the provision was, that he should not speak one word about German, nor in German. With a willing scholar, the Germans are the best language-masters in the world ; but, with such a learner as this, and too many of our travellers are like him, who could blame the professor for doing as most of his countrymen do when they get hold of an English pupil—making him *teach* English, in place of *learning* German ?

To this English indolence in acquiring foreign tongues the Russians furnish a most complete contrast. They have been always famed for their facility in acquiring these ; but we should think the secret lies fully as much in their methodical way of study as in any superiority of mental endowments. The Englishman is by nature as highly gifted as the Russian : when he applies himself seriously to any language, there are few can keep pace with him. He may not pronounce so well as some foreigners, but he masters not only the vocabulary, but the spirit, of a language more thoroughly than any competitor that can enter the field with him. Foreign languages and foreign literature are much more accurately appreciated by English writers than ours are by foreigners. The number of English, however, who take this trouble is so small, that foreigners carry off all the merit as linguists ; and none deserve a larger share of it than the Russians. The fact is, they begin at a very early age : it is no uncommon thing to find children at eight

conversing in French, German, and Italian, with great fluency. As soon as they are able to speak, they are placed under foreign governesses, generally natives of Switzerland or Germany, and sometimes of France. With these, and with their parents, they speak foreign languages; with servants, they employ Russian. In some families, tutors from England may now be met with. But even in families which cannot go to the expense of employing foreigners, several languages are spoken by the children. They learn them at school; French and German being as much used as Russian in all respectable places of education.

Nor are the Russians distinguished merely by the number of languages which they possess: they are remarkable also for the correctness with which they pronounce every foreign tongue. Their own impracticable alphabet is of great use in this respect. Those who can pronounce the elementary sounds of Russian have already got over all the difficulties and delicacies in the pronunciation of every other European tongue.

Before leaving this subject, it may be mentioned that it is a mistake to suppose, as is generally done, that the Russians pay no attention to their own language. On the contrary, every person of rank not only learns his native tongue, when young, but continues to study it afterwards. He applies himself to it much more carefully than we do to ours. The fact of its not being yet in a state which would entitle it to be called a *fixed* language, renders its study very difficult even to them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STYLE OF LIVING AMONG THE NOBLES.

Splendid mansions—Style of entertaining—March of French cookery—Arrangements of the table—Simplicity—Feast of flowers—Names of guests—Domestic unhappiness—Mercenary marriages—Russian love-making—Costly feasts.

MANY of the wealthiest of the Russian nobles reside constantly at Moscow; but the more ambitious are, of course, attracted to St. Petersburg by the court. Their mansions are large and splendid. Their style of living, in the capital, greatly resembles that of the higher ranks in other parts of Europe. In summer, however, they are not seen to advantage, many being absent on their estates. They have at all times been celebrated for their hospitality to strangers; and, as we have already said, still deserve the character.

Their entertainments, however, are no longer on the rude scale of indiscriminate hospitality described by some travellers. Extravagant feasts are still given, as will be mentioned below; but it is more from their costliness, than by the number of guests invited, that they deserve to be thus characterized. So far as we had any opportunity of judging, the dinner at the table of a Russian nobleman is now little different from that of a nobleman in any other country. French cookery, like the French language, is fast overrunning the earth, levelling all

national distinctions, and, doubtless, destroying all national prejudices. The professors of this popular branch of science are to be met with everywhere ; everywhere, too, are their labours in behalf of humanity munificently rewarded. A *chef-de-cuisine*, who leaves Paris on the top of the Diligence, with nothing but his nightcap and saucepans, rolls back from Russia, as from England, in his own carriage, loaded with the tribute of grateful nations.

It may not be below the dignity of travellers to record that we were struck with the extreme elegance of some of the Russian tables. Those who think that good taste is better displayed by simplicity than by profusion, instead of making the board groan beneath a load of vulgar eatables, have adopted the French method, which is spreading among ourselves, of having all large dishes carved at the sideboard : thus leaving the dinner-table free for a tasteful display of fruit, in gold baskets, and vases of rich workmanship, intermixed with costly ice-pails and bouquets of roses. To prevent the starving guest from supposing that he is to dine on perfumes altogether, the soup—with which *pâtés* are generally handed round—is placed before the lady of the house ; but no other dish is put on the table till the fish appears—which is at a much later stage of the dinner than English taste would approve. On the same principle of keeping the grosser operations connected with the table as much out of the way as possible, many have the kitchen detached from the mansion, there being merely a range of stoves near the servant's door of the dining-room, for keeping the dishes warm.

Some families have adopted the fashion of *marking* the place each guest is to occupy at table with a slip of paper bearing his name laid on the destined plate. This practice, which is seldom seen elsewhere—except in Germany, at fashionable (!) three o'clock dinners, or formal supper parties, to which the old school still adhere—has nothing to recommend it. In place of the delightful ease of an English dinner-table, where every one drops into his place without the aid of the drill-sergeant, the guest has to hunt about for his name, and, after all, may have the pleasure of being danced half-a-dozen seats down by a footman telling you that this is *not* your name, and then danced back again with the assurance that it *is* your name—the soup cooling all this time to a jelly, and those you wished to sit beside exiled to Siberian distance.

Wines are dealt with pretty much as in England: the plainer ones on the table, to which the guests may help themselves; the finer brought round by the butler, when the host has invited you to join him. The old English privilege, now disappearing even in England, of asking ladies to take wine, is as much unknown in Russia, as in other parts of the continent. Drinking after dinner, except in bachelor parties, is happily unknown; both gentlemen and ladies escaping to the drawing-room as soon as coffee has been handed round.

With all his wealth, however—with all his passion for travelling, all his taste for languages, and all the elegance of his table—the Russian noble is still but half-civilized.*

* We have seen this term applied by an able writer in *Blackwood* to the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes; but surely with little justice. These

Such, at least is the opinion of those who know him best. He puts on the dress and learns the manners of other European nations, but is infinitely behind them in all the qualities that constitute real refinement. This sentence may appear a harsh one, but it was still more harsh as expressed to us by a gentleman who had studied them for years. "The Russian," said he, "has but the *exterior* of a civilized man: in *heart* he is both brutal and cruel—devoid of delicacy and feeling. Before strangers, he is smooth and plausible; in the bosom of his family, he is rough and tyrannical. For instance—the kindness and affection which a wife expects, and is entitled to, are seldom rendered by a Russian spouse. He treats her well before the world, because otherwise he would be reminding people that he is a Russian; but in private, harsh words—ay, and harsher *blows*—are often inflicted on his helpless mate."

Of the real truth of this charge no stranger can know much; but we heard from a Russian himself, that he knew the practice of beating their wives to be extremely common among people of rank: while a foreign lady, who has been in the country, says, "that she *suspected* it in many cases, and *knew* that it was done, and cruelly, in several; one victim, of high rank, having often bared her arm and shoulder to show the too obvious marks of her husband's ferocity."

nations are as much entitled to be called "civilized" as ourselves. Of *wealth*, indeed, they have less than the English; but of *free institutions*, though differently modified, they can boast as well as England: while of *education*, taking the whole population, they display even a higher average than ourselves; and these certainly are good titles to all the honours of civilization, even when wealth is deficient.

These remarks, of course, apply only to a class of families who seldom visit foreign countries. The Russian families whom we see gracing the courts of London and Paris, it should be known, are in every way exceptions to the great mass of the Russian nobility. They are the *élite* of the empire. Few travel, or are sent on diplomatic missions, except such as are distinguished by elegance of manners, as well as rank, and, above all, by self-command: in short, such as are most like the better classes of the rest of Europe, and consequently most unlike the bulk of their fellow nobles.

The mercenary, heartless way in which marriages are arranged among the great may account for their domestic unhappiness. "A lover in Russia," said a Livonian nobleman, "must proceed very differently from what he would in Germany. A German maiden is to be won only through her *heart*: here this antiquated method would never do—for the excellent reason that a Russian woman *has no heart*. The admiring swain must address himself to her vanity, her envy, her desire to shine in society. She is as incapable of loving as her husband. In fact, the passion of love, about which German and English novelists have blotted so much paper, is here altogether unknown. People marry solely for convenience—because their parents are pleased, their estates lie near each other, or their fortunes are suitable."

If this representation be true, who will wonder to hear of unhappy marriages, separations, and all their melancholy consequences? The transfer of a spouse by a husband of high rank seems to be not unknown. A wealthy widow, whose name is familiar in the fashionable

circles of western Europe, was originally married to one of the G—— family. But the second husband having offered her first lord 50,000 roubles (2000*l.*) to give her up, the transfer was speedily and amicably accomplished. Decency required a short retirement from the world, but, in due time, the lady appeared as the wife of one of the most powerful of the Russian nobles.

That their civilization is but half completed, is also proved by the tasteless splendour of the entertainments in which many indulge. They are not contented with what nature can furnish, but they must oppose nature. The finest fruits at the proper seasons are not enough for them: some display the rarest delicacies of the stove and the garden, in the months when art must help the season. Great sums are expended on hothouses, in order to produce grapes and other unseasonable rarities in winter. Cherries are to be seen at table in the month of February, at a guinea apiece. Prince P——, who used to spend 1300*l.* on a single entertainment, was in the habit of surpassing this cherry-fête, by displaying plums, peaches, and apricots, at the expense of a couple of guineas for each piece. Little wonder, then, that he has now got rid of his troublesome wealth!

CHAPTER XIX.

NATIONAL DISHES.

Expensive fish—The *sterlet*—Foreign wines—Russian wines of the Don, the Crimea, &c.—*Kvass*, the national beverage—*Vodki*—Delicious tea—The horrors of eating *Batavia*—Buckwheat pudding—Russian broth—Hospitable matrons—Mushrooms—Their abundance and safety—Our poisonous kinds eaten in Russia—Mode of cooking—Suggestions—Is tallow eaten by the Russians?—*Tschi*, or cabbage-soup—*Sniatky*.

At the close of the last chapter, the extravagance of the Russian nobles was referred to; and now, as specimens of it, we may mention a few of the favourite, and truly very expensive, dishes seen at their tables.

To begin with their favourite dish, the **STERLET** (*Sturio ruthenus*). For one of these, not much larger than a good salmon, a nobleman, or even a merchant, when he is giving a feast at his daughter's marriage, has been known to pay as much as twelve hundred roubles (50*l.*); three and four hundred roubles are not uncommon prices. On tasting this delicacy, we by no means found it so exquisite as to justify this enormous price. It is a white fish, with a taste something between salmon and turbot, but not as good as either. It is generally served up whole, dressed with mushrooms and oliyes. The value would appear to be enhanced in some way or other not explained to us—probably by the expense of transporting them alive, for they are sold

very cheap at the places where they are caught. They are very abundant in the Volga. The sea of Azoff also teems with them; and even in the Black Sea they are so abundant, that at Odessa they may be had for a shilling apiece. Some years they would appear to be dearer than others in the capital; for of the two which we saw alive in a tank in the Neva, the larger, about the size of a salmon in its first year, was offered for 175 roubles (7*l.*), and the smaller, like a sea-trout, for 75 roubles (3*l.*) This was called *uncommonly* cheap, but seven pounds sterling, for eight or nine pounds of fish, was no bad price. It seems to be a very lively fish. The back and head, which are nearly black, are covered with diamond-shaped spots, the corners of which consist of hard prominent points.

The extravagance of the Russians in regard to WINES is also worthy of remark. Their own country produces wine, but it is a rule with a Russian to care for nothing that can be got at home. You almost insult him to ask for a bottle of the wine of the Crimea, were it only to be able to say that you had drunk Russian wine in Russia. The government has been at great pains to encourage the culture of the vine in the South, but as yet with no decided success. Some of the wines of the Crimea are very tolerable, but the greater part of them are little better than red ink, with plenty of sugar in it.

In general they use nothing but French wines, and these of the most expensive quality: their predilection for *champagne* is well known. At home or abroad, the Russian is steady in his affection for this beverage: it is the only one which he seems to think fit for rational beings.

Of the whole quantity annually exported from the departments of the Marne, Ardennes, &c., the Russians take 400,000 bottles ;—which is only 6000 less than the quantity taken by England and her colonies, east and west. Yet, even after allowing Russia this fair proportion of the genuine wine, it remains a mystery where the rest can come from ; a mystery which the wine-merchants alone can solve. As to its being genuine, the French song merrily settles the question, when it tells us that this precious wine has the power of multiplying itself ; for, besides what is used in France and other parts of the world, there is much more of it drunk in Russia alone than ever grew in Champagne.

Nowhere are wines seen in greater perfection than at the house of a wealthy merchant. His rule when he gives a feast, especially if he live in the provinces, is to have part of *every thing costly*. Port, Sauterne, Champagne, gin, English porter, all follow each other in indiscriminating confusion, till the hospitable mistress of the feast puts an end to the dinner, by handing to each guest a glass of brandy, upon which you kiss her hand, and she salutes your cheek.

The wines of the Don still keep their ground against those of the Crimea : one kind, resembling Champagne, is excellent. Those called *Stanitze* and *Zimlyanskoye* come very near Burgundy, both in colour and flavour ; but the greatest favourite of all is the *Vinomaroзка*, or frozen wine, made by mixing wine and brandy with the juice of berries peculiar to the districts about the mouth of the Don. The cultivation of the vine began there as long ago as Peter the Great's time ; but of late more atten-

tion has been paid to it than formerly, government having ordered experiments to be made in the south, on no less than several hundred kinds of vine-slips from all parts of the world. Russians are also sent to study the art of cultivating the vine, in the best wine districts of France.

With all their partiality, however, for imported luxuries, there is another home-made liquor for which nothing can shake their love ; and that is their KVASS. In vain have the English tempted them by establishing breweries for ale. Excellent though the ale be,—and it is the best we ever tasted out of England,—the Russians still keep by their national drink. The kvass is the thinnest, sourest, queerest kind of stuff ever concocted ; yet the Russian could not live without it. It is patronized by all ranks and all denominations. There is a vessel of it in every peasant's hut, from which the family are sipping the whole day long ; and you find it in bottles, on the same table with champagne. We met with it even in the public prisons ; a large tin vessel full of it, with a jug beside, being placed in every common room, for the prisoners to drink of at pleasure. The keepers told us they might as well deprive them of air at once as rob them of their kvass. It is made from rye boiled in a large quantity of water, which being afterwards fermented, acquires a sourish taste, far from disagreeable, and most effectual in allaying thirst. It is of a yellowish colour, not unlike the barley-water of the sick-room. There is a dear kind of it, sold in bottles at 6*d.* each, called white kvass, which is exceedingly good and brisk.

The VODKI, or brandy, in which the poor Russian indulges to such a debasing excess, is a light-coloured spirit, not unlike the corn-brandy of Sweden, but more harsh and fiery. It is distilled chiefly from rye; but oats and barley are also employed. None but the lower classes use this spirit freely; for neither in their native country, nor elsewhere, have we ever found reason to look on the better class of Russians as addicted to the use of ardent spirits. If not altogether entitled to be called abstemious in this respect, they are certainly not so bad as the French, who indulge more freely than is generally supposed; and they are infinitely superior to the better class of Swedes, Norwegians, or Scotch. It is a melancholy fact, that the three most highly-educated nations of Europe should, at the same time, be the hardest drinkers.

Another favourite beverage must not be forgotten—their TEA. The Russians are the most inveterate tea-drinkers out of China; and with such excellent tea as they have, the passion is quite excusable.

Tea in Russia and tea in England are as different as peppermint-water and senna. With us it is a dull, flavourless dose; in Russia it is a fresh, invigorating draught. They account for the difference by stating that, as the sea-air injures tea, we get only the leaves, but none of the aroma of the plant, which left Canton; while they on the other hand, receiving all their tea *overland*, have it just as good as when it left the celestial empire.* Be the cause what it may, there can be no doubt of the fact,

* See Vol. II., chap. xv., where the Chinese bazaar is mentioned at Nishnei-Novgorod.

that tea in Russia is infinitely superior to any ever found in other parts of Europe. Englishmen are taken by surprise on tasting it; even those who never cared for tea before, drink on during the whole of their stay in Russia. Like everything else here, however, it is very expensive: the cheapest we saw even at Nishnei-Novgorod, which is the greatest mart in the empire, cost from 11 to 12 roubles (about ten shillings) a pound; and when a bearded Russian wants to give a feast, he will pay as high as 50 roubles (2*l.*) for a pound of some high-flavoured kind of bohea. The difference between these and English prices arises from the same cause as the difference in the quality—the long land-carriage, which is tedious and very expensive, through regions where there are neither roads nor resting-places.

It should be stated, however, that, in travelling especially, *no* price will be thought too high for this, the only comfort of the wanderer in Russia. It banishes many a headach, and cheers under all the annoyances of a country which, by universal consent, is the most troublesome and fatiguing to travel in that can be visited. Tea may always be had at the inns in large towns, but being too dear an article for most of the country post-houses, everybody should carry a stock for himself: we once paid 6*s.* 8*d.* for the tea necessary to make breakfast for four; but such a charge is rare.

The Russian seldom *eats* with his tea; he never adds cream to it like the English; nor does he disgust people by making tea-drinking an excuse for tippling, like the Germans, who half fill their cup with brandy when they can get it. The only thing the Muscovite mingles with

his tea is sugar, and sometimes a thin slice of lemon; and these being duly added, he sips the brown draught, not from a *cup*, but from a common drinking-glass, slowly and seriously, with all the solemnity of a libation.

Now that we have fallen on the subject of national tastes, we must not forget to describe the most atrocious compound ever presented to man in the shape of food. It is the Russian soup called *BATINIA*, which, to English palates, tastes worse than poison, but which these our allies, high and low of them, delight in as the greatest delicacy on earth. Hearing so much in its praise, we ventured once, and only once—for there is no fear of its being asked for a second time—to give a hint that we should like to make a trial of it. But—“*O dura Russorum ilia!*”—the taste is not yet away from our lips, nor are we yet persuaded that the skin has returned to our throats.

A plateful of this yellow liquid—it ought not to be called soup—was placed before us, with a scum on its top something like a thin coating of sulphur. Adventurously diving through this surface, what did we discover?—Lumps of rotten sturgeon, slices of bitter cucumber, spoonfuls of biting mustard; in short a concatenation of all the most putrid, most acrid, most villanous substances that nature produces. The Witches’ broth was nothing to it:—

“ Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wing of bat, and tongue of dog,”

would be delicacies most exquisite, compared with these Russian horrors. But, though both *smell* and *sight* were well-nigh daunted, we resolved to persevere like

men. We had begun the perilous adventure, and could not with honour draw back, before *taste* had also been put to proof. A spoonful of it was accordingly raised to the lips; when, lo! besides its other recommendations, it was found to be literally as cold as ice: for the mountain projecting above the surface, which we had innocently supposed to be some nice redeeming jelly, of Russian invention, turned out to be a lump of ice from "the frosty Caucasus," or some other vile place. That mouthful was the worst we ever swallowed! It would be impossible to depict the looks of anguish which we, a party of deluded, inexperienced Englishmen, cast on each other. It took away the breath; tears rolled from our eyes; we were more than satisfied—we were humbled, silenced, overcome; and made a vow before the whole company of strangers, never more to be lured into an attempt to make new discoveries in the adventurous region of Russian dishes.

The Russians consider this soup the highest possible luxury, and eat it when it can be got (which is not often, as it is expensive) with the same avidity that a French *abbé* displays in attacking his *dindon aux truffes*, or an Italian his beccaficoes.

With one of their dishes we could have made out very well; the pudding, or something in that way, made from BUCKWHEAT. Being very cheap, it is much eaten by the middling classes, but may also be seen at the tables of the great, at least once or twice a-week. It is considered very wholesome. Buckwheat, however, being a very important article in Russian agriculture, it will be more particularly mentioned at a subsequent page.

We once got a very good kind of BROTH, with an unwonted, but not unpalatable, addition—huge spoonfuls of thick cream thrown into the plate. This was in a part of the country where, of course, cheese is unknown, otherwise the cream would have been less abundant.

Generally speaking, the true place for seeing national dishes, as well as national manners, is at the tables of the native merchants. In the provinces, they live in old abundance and old hospitality. When a feast is made, the mistress of the house, as already hinted, is completely the slave and servant of her husband's guests. She waits upon them at table, with unwearied assiduity, from first to last, coming round with the dishes herself, and scarcely sharing of any till all have been served.

The only dish we should really envy the Russians for is their MUSHROOMS. In England, mushrooms are used by very few: in Russia, the use of them is universal, from the emperor to the beggar; and those who know what a delicate dish they make—the salted ones excepted—need not be told that they are always welcome, whether dressed with a rich sauce, as at the tables of St. Petersburg, or with the plainer art of a hut by the way-side. Many of the peasants live almost entirely upon them, at some seasons of the year. In the summer afternoons, bands of village children may be seen searching for them in the woods, with little baskets on their arms; and in the mornings, at some places south of Moscow, we met long files of women, returning from the forests with the hasty growth of the night, heaped in large black baskets on their shoulders, like a string of fish-women of the Moray-frith, trudging to market with their odorous "creels."

We did not hear the value of those sold in one year at St Petersburg; but were told, that in Moscow, not fewer than 200,000 roubles' worth (8000*l.*) are brought to market every summer. They are most abundant in the districts where open forests occur, and are always more plentiful under certain kinds of trees; far south, they disappear altogether. The best weather for them is sunshine, intermixed with showers by day and warmth overnight.

What surprised us most of all regarding them was to find, that *the very kinds which are poisonous with us, are here used every day without the least danger.* "These are the mushrooms of your English woods," said a gentleman with whom we first saw them: "why don't you eat them at home?" The information was far from tranquillizing: few would like to be told that they had made the best part of their dinner on poison; but as no evil consequences followed, we doubted whether they could be really the same. Further inquiry, however, convinced us beyond all doubt that, be the cause what it may, mushrooms which are highly poisonous in Great Britain, are perfectly innocent in Russia. This is no new discovery: our men of science are already aware of the fact, but none of them have been able to explain it. With us, only *three* kinds are eatable—the common mushroom (*Agaricus campestris*), the fairy ring, (*Agaricus pratensis*), and the *Agaricus Georgii*:—in Russia, nearly ten times that number are used; in fact, almost every kind. A French cook told us, that he himself knew at least *twenty* varieties, all fit for the table, and that an accident from them is here totally unknown; he considered such a thing quite impossible. The only precaution

necessary, he said, is not to boil two distinct species together; but this is merely from the degree of boiling which suits one not being sufficient for the other.

That mushrooms, virulently poisonous in one country, are eaten with safety in another, is well known in other cases; as, for instance, in that of the fly mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), which is very common in England, and always poisonous there, while in Kamtschatka it is used as a frequent article of food. In France and Italy also some of our noxious mushrooms become quite safe. Now, what can be the cause of this remarkable diversity? Surely the question merits more attention than has yet been bestowed on it. It is not enough to say, that difference of soil and climate explain the mystery: for though we know that *culture* changes the properties of plants, converting what is poisonous in its wild state, into a wholesome esculent when raised in the garden,—as in the case of the common celery, for example; yet, throughout the whole vegetable kingdom, we find almost no other instance of a plant, which is poisonous in one country, becoming wholesome, *without culture*, when transplanted to another, and left entirely to itself, and, in both, placed in apparently the same circumstances as to soil, exposure, &c. After all, a great part of the secret may lie, not in the plant, but in the mode of preparing it for the table; and it is to this point that some of our practical authorities ought to direct their attention. So far as we can judge, the Russian cook, on first cutting up these spoils of the forest, makes a much more copious use of salt than is done with us; and the efficacy of this agent in deadening the poisonous quality is sufficiently proved by the melan-

choly case recorded in the medical treatises, of a French officer and his wife, both of whom died in thirty-two hours after eating of certain mushrooms, while the person who supplied them, and his whole family, made a hearty and wholesome meal from the same gathering. A careful inquiry having been afterwards instituted, it was found that no blame could be attached to the latter : the misfortune appeared to have originated entirely in the different modes of cooking employed—one family had eaten them without any addition ; the other had strongly salted them before boiling, and then squeezed them carefully before partaking of them. Such an occurrence as this, while it points to a very important fact in the dressing of these productions, enjoins also more than ordinary caution on those who would make experiments with them ; but that experiments ought to be made with more diligence than has yet been done, little argument can be required to show. Heaven forbid that the day should come when our peasantry shall, from necessity, be driven to think of these as substitutes for less doubtful fare ! But no one who has tasted the savoury dish made of them by the Russians, while he deprecates the prospect of their ever being used *from necessity* in England, will deny that, *as a luxury*, they would form a most desirable addition to the tables both of rich and poor. A few kinds have already found their way to the tables of the better classes amongst us ; but it is a *more general use* of the easily procured species that is now contended for. Why should the lower classes of other countries continue exclusively to enjoy a cheap and simple delicacy, which nature seems also to have intended for those of England ?

We have now nearly done with the subject of Russian dishes; yet, as the reader may have remarked, nothing has been said of a dish which, in England, is believed to be a favourite article of food with this refined people—namely, the delicate and rare substance vulgarly known by the name of tallow. The belief that all Frenchmen live on frogs is not more common than the one that all Russians live on the dainty dish now named; and the one is just as correct as the other. Without reverting, however, to the subject of the diet of the lower orders, which has already been considered, we shall merely add, that there is one dish sometimes seen amongst them, which we should be glad to see plenty of within reach of our own poor. Who that has at all heard of Russian dishes, has not heard of their *Tschi*, or cabbage-soup? Soups in all parts of the continent are generally little better than an aggravated edition of toast-and-water; but this is really a good sensible affair. Like the soup already spoken of, it is sometimes mixed with *sniatky* (fish); and then does it become all that Russian taste can desire of most luxurious and delightful.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ENGLISH IN ST. PETERSBURG—WITH NOTICES OF THE EXPENSE OF LIVING IN IT, AND HINTS ON THE HOTELS, &c.

English mercantile houses—Style of living among the British—Nature of their business—Large capitals—Tallow trade—Residences of the English—The English quay—English Back Line—The factory—Church—Library—Clubs—Horse-races—Foxhounds—Bear-shooting—English and Russian merchants contrasted—No Jews merchants—Scotch land-stewards—English tutors and governesses—Mr. Baird, the engineer—Total number of English—Warning to people not to be rash in going to Russia—Capricious treatment from the authorities—Englishman sent to Siberia—Grooms from England—English physicians in St. Petersburg—Country cottages of the English—Of the Russian nobles—Hard names of the nobility—Short summer—Compared with that of England—Living here very cheap for the poor—Expensive for the rich—Costly furniture—House rent—Bad hotels—Excellent English houses—*Tables d'hôte*—Coffee-houses—Travellers' purchases—Velvets—Leather—Slippers—Furs.

IN several of the preceding chapters allusion has been made to the difference between the habits of Russians and English. There can be no doubt, however, that, in some things, the better class of Russians have imitated English manners to a considerable degree. Even such of the nobles as have not travelled enjoy good opportunity of becoming acquainted with our national habits through the great number of English resident as merchants in St. Petersburg, many of whom are very intimate with the most distinguished of the Russian nobility.

The English society here is not only numerous, but most respectable. It is chiefly composed of gentlemen possessing all the high qualities which combine to make up one of the highest characters in the world—that of an English merchant ; a title which, on the continent, is still one of the most honourable that a man can bear, being associated in the minds even of our enemies with ideas of strict integrity, great liberality, and high intelligence. Among the more distinguished houses are those of Thompson, Bonar, and Co. ; Cayley and Co., another long-established firm of high character ; Gray and Co. ; that of Allan, Stuart, and Co., &c. Many of these gentlemen live in great splendour, and their attention to travellers, properly introduced, is unbounded. In fact, the tone and general style of society among them is so superior, that, after visiting nearly every trading place on the continent, in which English are to be found, we must give the palm to our countrymen at St. Petersburg.

With the good sense and good taste which might be expected in men of this stamp, these gentlemen strictly refrain from politics. As the guests—and favoured ones—of the state, they are in honour bound to this line of conduct ; and from all we saw, we should say that the emperor has not in his dominions more loyal nor more devoted subjects, than the respectable and influential body composing the English society at St. Petersburg.

It is well known that many handsome fortunes have been made here by our countrymen : but they themselves maintain that the greatest fortunes have been made in Riga ; which may be easily accounted for, by the less expensive style of living in such a place, compared with that of the metropolis.

The peculiar nature of some branches of the Russian trade requiring a very large capital, so few natives can carry them on successfully, that our countrymen enjoy very nearly a monopoly of the more lucrative part of the commerce of St. Petersburg. The export of tallow, for instance, which is among the most important branches of the Russian trade, is almost entirely in their hands; and that the capital required to carry it on is very large, will be seen from the fact, that one house has been known to pay away as much as 400,000*l.* in a single year, on this article alone. Payments being made beforehand, or, at least, long before the delivery of the article at St. Petersburg, this trade is said to be very precarious. In order to secure the tallow which is to be delivered in England a year hence, it is necessary to send purchasers to the remotest parts of the empire full twelve months before; but if in the mean time prices should fall at London, the merchant loses not only the interest on his large capital for that long period, but also a great portion of his first outlay.

In connexion with this branch of trade, it may be stated, that it is not so much from having a larger proportion of cattle than other countries, that Russia is able to export such immense quantities of tallow, as from the circumstance that the people, instead of using that article itself, employ some substitute for it in their domestic economy. Most of the farmers, for instance, use fir-roots in place of candles, and carefully hoard the tallow of every ox they kill, knowing that it will sell as profitably as the produce of their fields.

Many respectable English families reside on the

Vassilii island, and in other quarters of the capital ; but the more fashionable part seem to prefer the quay of the Grand Neva, formerly described, and known as the English quay ; of which the establishment called 'the English Factory, and the houses of our merchants,' form some of the principal ornaments. The less pretending street in the rear of this, called *Galernoy Oulitza*, is so full of British, that it is always spoken of as the English Back Line (from its being at *the back* of the English quay). Here are situated the boarding-establishments and lodging-houses most frequented by our countrymen, some kept by English, and some by Americans. It is a street of great length, not mean and filthy as we had imagined, but very clean, and formed of handsome houses, with excellent pavement, from end to end. Each of the houses, like nearly all others here, has a large courtyard, either in front or rear.

Most of our countrymen may be seen once a day in the Exchange, a very handsome building in the Grecian style, near the Custom-house. The principal time of business is from four to half-past five, when the Russian merchants go home to supper, and the English to dinner.

There is no permanent residence for the English ambassador. Each new representative takes a house suited to his means. That which Lord Durham occupied is said to have cost him near a thousand pounds a-year.

The English Factory is chiefly occupied by a very handsome place of worship, and apartments for the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Law. This is the most beautiful and becoming English chapel in any part of the continent. There is also an excellent English library

attached to the establishment, of which strangers have a most liberal use, on the recommendation of members. There is a Presbyterian place of worship in another part of the city, where a Scottish clergyman officiates.

St. Petersburg contains two English clubs, one on the Moika, and another on the quay just spoken of. Both are excellent, and distinguished by their liberality to strangers; but we can speak only of the latter, where there is a copious supply of all the (permitted) newspapers, French, English, German, an account of which will be given at the close of the next chapter; also handsome apartments, good society, and unexceptionable dinners. Though called *English*, these clubs contain men of wealth of all nations.

With characteristic attachment to their home amusements, our countrymen have of late got up horse-races in true English style, and have now the satisfaction of seeing the Russians beginning to imitate them. In addition to these many English things, they have also a good pack of fox-hounds; but we did not hear that the Russian nobles risk their necks so freely with our friends in the field, as they do their money with them in the club-houses. They speak of excellent shooting in winter; and even in autumn there is tolerable sport among the partridges (a different species from ours), within thirty miles of the capital. Some Englishmen killed a great many elks the Christmas before our visit, about 70 versts (46 miles) from town. Another party shot two bears; but such luck is rare, many having been here several years without finding one.

Though not able to compete with our countrymen in

extensive speculations, there are in all parts of Russia many native merchants of great fortune. There is an immense difference between them, however, both as to way of living and general character. The former are held in great esteem and looked upon as a superior class, even by the nobles, to whom they give entertainments, and from whom they receive attentions in return. The Russian merchant, on the contrary, even when wealthy, is regarded as belonging to a degraded caste. There are various degrees of this degradation, the merchants being divided into guilds, first, second, &c., each having distinct privileges. We never saw a Russian merchant of any grade without thinking of a Jew, his dress and beard being generally so like those which continental Jews so frequently display. The resemblance goes still farther; as already stated, they are as greedy and as ready to overreach as any Hebrew that ever trod the Rialto. With this grasping disposition the Russians succeed well as merchants on a small scale. They have that true love of pelf necessary to push them on in petty undertakings, but have not spirit for any great enterprise. Russian Jews are not allowed to settle in St. Petersburg, or to carry on business of any kind: Stieglitz, the wealthy Jew banker, is of German origin.

Returning to the subject of the British, however, we may state, that though there are many Scotchmen employed as land-stewards in various parts of Russia, yet few of them are to be seen near the capital.

It surprised us to hear that so many English are now employed in Russia as tutors and governesses in noble

families. They are well paid, and in general do not appear to regret the choice they have made.

The English, or rather the Scotch medical men here, still enjoy a very respectable share of the public regard. Sir William Crichton has left Russia, and Dr. Walker has also retired, from the capital, leaving the field to Doctors Handyside, Macnab, and Lefevre. Sir James Wyllie, who was physician to the late emperor, continues to reside here, and is still in favour at court. The Grand Duke Michael has also a medical attendant from Scotland, a nephew and namesake of the learned knight last named. If we mistake not, however, the golden days of foreign physicians in this country are now gone by; for though a good many surgeons from Edinburgh are still employed in the navy, Russia will ere long be able to manufacture doctors for herself.

Although, as formerly stated, there are few English shopkeepers or general tradesmen here, compared with those of other foreign nations, yet on the whole there cannot be less than 2400 Englishmen in St. Petersburg, of one class or other. Of these a great number are employed by Mr. Baird, a thriving engineer, in building steam-boats, iron bridges, &c. Many are also placed at the head of government works of different kinds. Nearly all of these superintendents, in compliance with a usage already referred to, glory in the title of captain or some other warlike distinction, conferred by the emperor, to give them dignity in the eyes of his people. Some of these gentlemen are tolerably paid, but none, so far as we could hear, handsomely. An Englishman who super-

intends a large number of workmen, employed in the fabric of a very important article, has only 120% (3000 roubles) a-year, and we did not hear that he values his military distinction at a great deal.

On the whole, we saw no inducement to tempt Englishmen to enter the Tzar's employment in any capacity whatever. Few of our countrymen now in Russian pay appear to be very much satisfied with their position. Even were they to be renumerated in the very handsomest manner, what attraction can there be in a service, where they are every moment liable to be the victims of the most capricious and unsparing despotism? It was but the other day that an Englishman who had unhappily been lured to St. Petersburg, in order to superintend some public works, was banished to Siberia, for what appears to have been a misapprehension regarding the perquisites included in his contract. Warned, therefore, by such an example, Englishmen, whether mere mechanics or men of science and skill, ought to ponder well before they abandon a country where the oppressor cannot trample on the weak, for the brilliant but perilous honour of serving a master whose power is subject to no control.

Illiberal, uncharitable as it may sound, we cannot help confessing that we have never witnessed without a grudge so many of our countrymen transferring their talents and experience to the service of the stranger. What has Russia—what have the other nations of Europe—ever sent us back in return for our too frequent exportations of this nature? Nothing but rivalry, and exclusion from their markets, the moment they think it

possible to cripple our commerce by excessive burdens and unjust restrictions.

There still remains to be mentioned a class of our countrymen who have of late been employed in considerable numbers, both at St. Petersburg and in the provinces—we mean grooms from St. James's and trainers from Newmarket. The more wealthy of the Russian nobles now go to great expense in keeping certain kinds of horses, especially trotters and racers; and, by giving large wages, have induced not a few "crack men" to go and take charge of their studs. Those of them who remain in or near the capital may find little reason to repent their exile; but such as go five or six hundred miles to some lonely place in the interior, are not in the most comfortable condition, however kindly treated; though it is but fair to add, that, in the families of the nobility, English dependents of every description are always most indulgently, and even affectionately, treated by their employers.

With true English taste for country life, many of the merchants have built pretty cottages along the shores of the bay, where they spend the brief but beautiful summer with their families. Their example in this, also, has been followed by some of the noble Russians, whose villas on the road to Peterhof are very fine. Among these are *Kras-naiamouisa* and *Hah-hah*, elegant mansions belonging to the Naryshkine family. Other families, such as those of Ostermann-Tolstoy, Khitrovo, Daschkoff, Chouvaloff, Demidoff, and many other "offs," might be named among the possessors of fine villas in the neighbourhood; but the names of the proprietors are as difficult to

transcribe as those of Viasemski, Belzkoï, Miloradovitch, Belocelski, Lapoukhine, Zavadofski, Ghika, Cheremetieff, Jakovleff, Tchernicheff, Roumantsoff, Lomonosoff, Khanikoff, Tchitchagoff, Ismailoff, &c. &c., which adorn the mausoleums and monuments of the capital, but are never placed by the traveller in his notes, from the difficulty of writing such unwonted sounds.

When we expressed our delight at the beautiful evenings of July, our countrymen never failed to remind us that the summer-life of the Russian fashionables is the shortest in Europe. They can seldom leave St. Petersburg before the beginning of June, and the increasing frosts compel them to return again by the first of September—that is, they are taking their flight for town at the very time when the higher classes of happy England are beginning to make themselves comfortable in the country. Nay, their summer often terminates before these three brief months are out. In the beginning of August, during our stay in St. Petersburg, cold, rain, and high winds prevailed with such severity, that some gentlemen told us they must soon commence their preparations for town, the winter having, in all probability, already set in. At least, when the weather breaks in this way, though they may not have snow, they are sure to have little but rain and cold till the frost appears in grim reality. Winter in August, good friends—think of that! Truly this is a delightful climate: a few weeks, or at most, months of boiling heat, and throughout all the rest cold so intense that the circulation nearly stagnates. Even in summer we are reminded what their winter colds are, by the huge stoves, like houses, in the churches,

as well as in the lobbies of theatres, which in winter are always well heated, for servants to shelter themselves in. Yet, with every precaution, coachmen at that season are often frozen to death, while waiting for or driving their masters. Sentinels also die on their posts in winter-nights, when the thermometer is often more than fifty degrees below zero! Though there are large houses for drilling the soldiers in, their sufferings from cold, even when going through their exercise, it is said, are most dreadful.

May not such facts justify us in asking, "Where is there a country favoured like our own?" We complain of our climate; but, equally remote from the treacherous heats of Italy and the freezing colds of Russia, it is, beyond doubt, the best in the world.

The expense of living in St. Petersburg being a subject of considerable interest to the general reader, it may be stated that, to those who can content themselves with the bare necessities of life, this city is, perhaps, one of the cheapest places in the world. The sum for which an economist may support himself is incredibly small. We have heard of a foreigner who expended no more than six shillings a-week; yet, by his own confession, he wanted for nothing!

This, however, applies only to the lower and middle classes: for people of fortune, St. Petersburg is one of the dearest places in the world. As already stated, the general style of living among these is ruinously expensive. The variety of new and costly dresses required by the ladies of a family, whether young or old, is beyond all that female extravagance ever imagined in any other

part of Europe. The style of furniture now in vogue also occasions an immense expenditure. Costly mirrors—numerous windows, each of a single pane—gilding, in tasteless profusion—furniture of the rarest kinds of wood—marble of the most costly descriptions—articles of jasper, malachite, and porphyry—or-molu ornaments of extreme beauty—gold and silver plate of the newest forms—in short, all that honest wealth, or dishonest poverty can purchase, are deemed indispensable in a Russian mansion of the highest class. The Russian rule is, that nothing which is not rare, and consequently expensive, can be worth having. Add to these the high prices of wines, and of all articles of luxury for the table, and it will at once be seen, that none can make any figure here without an enormous income. The single item of house-rent swallows up the annual profits wrung from a couple of thousand serfs. Several houses were pointed out to us as letting for 25,000 roubles (1000*l.*) a-year; a rent which is very rarely heard of even in London. It must be added, however, that from the immense number of servants kept by the Russian nobility, a first-rate town mansion here is larger than one of corresponding rank in England.

The passing stranger finds few *good* hotels. *Demuth's*, the most fashionable, is dear and uncomfortable. This being a Russian house, you have to pay while in it for a numerous train of servants, and, after all, can scarcely get any attendance. Each man, Hindu-fashion, having a separate department, the commission you want executed is delegated from one to another, and probably neglected altogether. *Coulon's*, in the Nefskoï, we have heard

highly spoken of, by travellers who have been in Russia since the time of our visit. The *Hôtel de Londres* and *Hôtel de Paris* are on the plan of the second-rate hotels of Paris, with bad rooms, indifferent *restaurants*, or *tables-d'hôte*, high prices, plenty of filth, and noise insufferable. The German house, *Heide's*, on the Vassilii-Ostroff, is very good for a short stay; but those who like English comfort and English cleanliness cannot be better anywhere than in the house of Mrs. Cotesworth, in the *English Back Line*, where they may have good board, lodging, and attendance—in short, everything except wine—for the marvellously reasonable charge of 8 roubles (6s. 8d.) a-day. Mrs. Wilson's, much frequented by Americans, is also an excellent house. Good private lodgings may be had in the same street, and other parts of the town, at London prices.

The fees for sights, and the other incidental expenses of the traveller, make St. Petersburg, and Russia generally, more expensive than most parts of the continent. Dinner at a restaurateur's, including the cheapest wine, seldom costs less than 7 or 8 francs, and is not better than what would cost only one-half in Paris. A bottle of small-beer in the coffee-houses (of which there are scarcely any in the French style) is charged 8d.; in Paris it would be 2d. A hackney-coach for two persons to go a short distance into the country, where some fête was going forward, was charged near 60 rubles, or more than twice the Paris price. Clothes are very dear, always excepting the velvet dressing-gowns already spoken of. Leather articles of all kinds are cheap; and as Russian leather, though not at all durable, is in high repute from

the peculiar flavour which the manufacturers of other countries have never succeeded in imitating, strangers always lay in a large stock of them. Ordinary boots are about the same price as in Paris ; that is, one-half the price of a London fashionable shop ; but dress-boots, that *look* well, may be bought for 7*s.* 6*d.* Morocco boots for the dressing-room, and ladies' slippers, of all imaginable hues, are often brought to England, as presents, by those who choose to pay the duty on them at home. Furs are also so cheap, in comparison with English prices, that travellers are in the way of lining their old cloaks (thus escaping the duty) with a sufficient quantity to keep their fair friends in England warm for at least a couple of winters.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE UNIVERSITY AND LIBRARIES—FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE.

Great exertions of the Emperor Alexander in behalf of national education—Result doubtful—University of St. Petersburg—Its comparative inferiority—Number of students and professors—Compared with Dorpat—Academy of Sciences—Fossil remains—Imperial Library—Persian manuscripts—Academy of Painting—Hermitage Gallery—Murillo—Paul Potter—Periodical and general literature—Poets—Karamsin.

UNTIL the time of the late Emperor Alexander, Russia, in regard to education, was the most neglected nation of Europe. Under him, however, much was done to remove this stigma. Schools were established all over the country; universities were planted in the principal cities, and liberally endowed; men of ardour and learning were sought out and induced to settle in them: in short, neither cost nor encouragement was spared in the good cause.

But has the result corresponded with the benevolent patriot's anticipations? Has education spread among the poor and the ignorant? Has the seed so liberally scattered on a not ungrateful soil really begun to bear its goodly fruits? Alas! we shall hereafter see that in spite of all that was done, and is doing, popular education is advancing but slowly; for in many of the governments of the interior through which we shall pass in the

course of our wanderings, out of every four or five hundred of the population, there is not more than *one* young person attending school. The educational schemes of the government have hitherto been unsuccessful in the provinces, because the people, being ignorant of the value of instruction, seldom think of sending their children to school.

In the large cities, however, public seminaries are most successfully conducted and numerous attended. This holds true of the capital more particularly. The number of gymnasia in St. Petersburg is very great, in addition to military and normal schools, and, in fact, educational institutions of every kind. All of these are very flourishing, with the exception of the university alone, which, though opened under the most favourable auspices, and with the brightest promise of almost immediately attaining high eminence, appears to be still very inferior to its ancient and highly-celebrated rival at Moscow, and is even eclipsed by the university of Dorpat, in Livonia. The institution last named would appear to be the most prosperous of all the universities in Russia, many of its professors, such as Struve, the astronomer, Parrot, the traveller, and others, being men of great eminence in the scientific world. It is usually attended by six hundred students; while St. Petersburg seldom reckons more than two hundred and fifty, divided among the goodly array of forty-two professors. In both universities, as indeed in nearly all throughout the empire, the principal chairs are filled by Germans. The university of St. Petersburg was founded by Alexander in the year 1819; and was the seventh which that enlightened monarch had established during his reign.

The number of scientific establishments in St. Petersburg is very great ; but we can mention only the *Imperial Academy of Sciences*, on the quay of the Vassilii-Ostroff which possesses collections of immense value, in almost every department of human knowledge. Its library contains more than 105,000 volumes, including many valuable manuscripts. The Zoological Museum is among the most celebrated in Europe, from containing some of the most singular fossil remains that have yet been discovered ; especially those of the mammoth, found in the ice at the mouth of the Lena, in Siberia, the bones of the leg of which are as thick as the human body. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of wonder with which we gazed on this huge monster of another world ; a naked hideous anatomy, standing in grim mockery of all that has passed, and is passing, around him. The flesh, skin, and hair, were quite entire at the time of his first discovery (1799-1800), and even now his well-propped bones look sturdy enough to carry him through our modern world, if he had any regard for the degenerate elves which usurp his place. His vast bulk, when first seen in his icy bed, so frightened the simple huntsman who discovered him, that he fell sick at the sight, and took to bed, believing that it boded him some evil fortune. He stands 9 feet 4 inches high, and 16 feet 4 inches long, without including the tusks or *horns* (as his neighbours, the Tungusians, more appropriately call them), which are of most amazing bulk, measuring along the curve 9 feet 6 inches, and weighing together 360lbs. avoirdupois ! The tusks of fossil elephants are so numerous in Eastern Siberia, that they are sold throughout

Russia as an article of commerce, and are used by ivory-turners for the same purposes, as the tusks of the elephants of the present day; but the works made from them are not so fine nor so beautiful. This museum contains also some fossil skeletons of other huge quadrupeds, such as the rhinoceros, the urus, and buffalo, all found in the same remote region. The mineralogical department is likewise very rich, as well as the collections of medals, the Asiatic and Egyptian rooms, &c.

The *Imperial Library*, in the Nefskoï Prospekht, would merit a chapter to itself, were it only for the immense number of valuable Oriental manuscripts, for which it has long been famous. To these have now been added the celebrated library of Ardebil, which came into the hands of the Russians on the fall of that city in 1827: it contained, exclusive of duplicates, ninety-six works of great value, such as the *Djami-Ettevarikh*, the *Zefer-Nameh*, by Sheref-ed-din Iesdy; the *Teskeret-etchchuera*, a History of Persian Poetry, by Daületchah; the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdousi; the *Iskender-Nameh*; the *Shah-Nameh* of Thumach the First; and a great many other poems. In addition to all these, there are at least 350 volumes, chiefly in the Persian and other eastern languages, brought by General Paskevitch from Erzerum, and the places adjacent.

As might be expected, among all these institutions for the advancement of science and learning, the Fine Arts have not been forgotten. The academy founded for their encouragement was liberally endowed, and is said to be at present in a very flourishing condition. It contains some valuable treasures; but the lover of pictures

will find still more to please him in the Hermitage Palace and its wilderness of rooms, where there are some thousands of pictures, many of them surpassing in value even the porphyry vases and other costly articles profusely scattered through this beautiful retreat. The Spanish collection is the richest in the world, out of Spain : there are Murillos and Morales enough to fill even Marshal Soult with envy. The late emperor added the Malmaison pictures to this splendid collection, which had already been enriched by the Houghton gallery, greatly to the disgrace of England, who ought never to have parted with such an acquisition. The Hermitage boasts of one of the most celebrated pictures in the world, Paul Potter's "Cow," which, however, can by no means be compared with his "Bull," at the Hague. Wouvermanns has a whole room to himself; and Schneiders fills another with his vast hunting-pieces. There are some lovely gems both of Cuyp and Ruysdaehl, three splendid Teniers, and Vandycks beyond all price. Rembrandt and Rubens have contributed some of their best works, as well as Gerard Douw, Mieris, and Ostade. We saw but one Titian and one Raphael, but the gallery is rich in the works of Claude, Vernet, and Poussin.

Several native artists of great promise have lately appeared, and those who are best acquainted with the nation believe that the Russians will yet rise high as painters.

From the Fine Arts passing to literature, and, first, to its most familiar department, we find that though the scientific periodicals of Russia, published by various

learned bodies, maintain a very high character, yet periodical literature of a general kind does not appear to meet with much encouragement. In no country, however, does it exercise more tyrannical sway. We do not mean that it influences the mass of the people, who, it is well known, do not read at all; but its power over the educated and "buying" portion of the community is so great, that they are invariably guided by the sentiments of their favourite periodicals, in all matters connected with literature, the drama, or the fine arts.

The total number of periodicals in Russia, including newspapers and scientific journals, lately amounted to 86; but their number has since been increased, in consequence of the establishment of printing presses in some of the remoter provinces. Of these, 45 are in the Russian language, and the remainder in French, German, the Lette tongue, &c.

Of all the periodicals, we are sorry to say, a French compilation of fashions and idle tales appears to be the most popular; but, so far as we could learn, none of the St. Petersburg periodicals, either daily or monthly, reckons more than 3000 subscribers. It would be unjust, however, to deny that there is very great talent displayed by the conductors of these publications. The *Literary Library*, a monthly periodical, whose editors are great admirers of English literature, and are accused of being partial to English principles in other matters, often contains articles which would do honour to any periodical in Europe. The influence exercised by this journal over the public taste is very great, its circulation being the highest of all the periodicals of the capital.

The *Son of the Country*, another monthly work, is also highly spoken of, but its talented editors are accused of dealing too much in German mysticism.

In the provinces of Russia periodical literature is almost unknown, except in the university towns, at some of which scientific journals are now published. One of these, the *Gazette of Moscow*, has long had a very high character, and it still circulates nearly 10,000 copies.

Of newspapers, St. Petersburg has great abundance. They are also exceedingly cheap, some being as low as 15 roubles (13s. 6d.) a-year, while few even of the daily ones are higher than twice that sum. With a parade of anxiety to communicate information on government subjects, and yet after all communicating but very little, each ministry publishes a newspaper on the affairs of its own department ; so that the general reader must buy the Minister of War's paper, that of the Home Minister, &c., before he can know what is passing. There are several German papers published here ; one of which, closely filled with advertisements, appears twice a-week. The *Gazette de St. Petersbourg* is in French ; but few of its articles are of any value. Those as well as the newspapers printed in the Russian language are printed in a clear type, on thin paper, of a small folio size, such as that which was employed for the Paris newspapers, until within the last ten or twelve years.

Generally speaking, Russian newspapers are mere vehicles for advertisements and government documents. They scarcely ever contain a single article of home news. Any intelligence that is given consists entirely of

extracts, accidents, deaths, wonderful stories, &c., from the English and other foreign journals. The *Northern Bee*, the title at least of which is well known in other parts of Europe, may in some respects be an exception to this remark. It is a daily paper, and said to be conducted by several gentlemen who enjoy great popularity as authors in other departments of literature. From the character given us of its articles, they would appear to display more playfulness of humour than depth of learning.

As will be seen at a future page, when we come to speak of the emperor's regulations regarding foreign books and newspapers, government has laid the severest trammels on the press, and consequently on thought. In spite of all these restrictions, however, Russian literature is advancing with great rapidity. Several of the authors who have recently appeared are distinguished by great boldness and originality of fancy. Some of the novelists, and especially Bulgarine (one of the editors of the *Northern Bee*), are highly popular as painters of national manners: their works are also read with great avidity in Germany, where they circulate through translations. Of all their poets Pouschkin* is the most popular; without being an imitator, he is said to have much of the manner of Byron.

Of all Russian authors, however, the name of Karamsin stands highest: but his merits are so universally known that it is unnecessary to speak of them here. Of their other dead authors, the names which we heard most fre-

* This distinguished poet fell in a duel (February, 1837), soon after our visit to St. Petersburg. The causes, and indeed the whole history, of this melancholy affair are of the most revolting description.

quently repeated among the Russians, are those of Bogdanovitch and Dmitriev, famed as poets. Of the first of these it may be stated, as he is little known to the English reader, that he was born in 1743, in the town of Perevolotchna, in Little Russia, and was author of the *Dushenka*, said to be a very happy performance, on the mythological story of Psyche, abounding in graces of style, and playfulness of illustration, as well as in lofty eloquence and polished vivacity. The Russians are extremely proud of this poem, and delight to speak of its author as the Moore of Russia. During his life, he was highly esteemed by Catherine, who gave him a lucrative appointment in some public department, after he had retired from the diplomatic service for which he was educated.

Dmitriev, born at Simbirsk, in 1760, and educated at Kasan, is the Lafontaine of Russia. His fables, remarkable for refinement of sentiment and simplicity of style, are extremely popular, the Russians having a great taste for this kind of composition. His epistles, odes, and satires, are also prized. The works of this author, next to those of Karamsin, did much towards fixing the Russian language. He was at first in the army, but afterwards in the civil service, where he enjoyed a handsome income. In fact, the Russian government never allows genius to linger either in poverty or obscurity.

Beyond those now mentioned, there are but few names, living or dead, that Russians can bring forward in connexion with literature. Its annals in this long-neglected region are short and scanty, as will be seen from the list

which we shall now give of all the other distinguished writers of whom they can boast.

Until the time of Prince Cantemir, in the reign of the Empress Anna, no author had employed the language with any success. His translations of Horace and Boileau are said (for, of course, all that we can state on the subject of Russian literature is at second-hand, on the authority of Russians themselves) to possess little of the merits of the originals; and the same remark has been made of his translation of Fontenelle's *Plurality of Worlds*. Strictly speaking, his successor, Lomonosoff, whose name stands high as an author, may be considered the father of taste and style among his countrymen. His *Peter the Great* contains many beautiful passages, but the interest is not well sustained. He wrote every species of poem,—tragedy, comedy, satires, epistles, elegies, eclogues, and songs; which last became very popular. The next name is that of Kerazkoff, who improved on his style and manner, but had less poetic talent than his predecessor. Having written epics on the conquest of Kasan and the history of Vladimir the Great, he was in his time pronounced the Homer of Russia, but is already forgotten. Maykoff now acquired unmerited reputation by two burlesque poems. Kniash-jinin wrote lively comedies on the manners of the time, which are still admired. Kostroff translated the Iliad into Alexandrine verse, and the poems of Ossian into prose. Bobroff, a most extravagant genius, was the author of many bombastic odes, and of the *Taurida*, a descriptive poem, abounding in bright passages. Petroff wrote odes on the victories of Catherine the Great.

Weissen was the author of some comedies which are full of humour. Muravieff, tutor of the Emperor Alexander, wrote treatises on Russian history, dialogues, essays, &c., all of which display much goodness of heart and love of virtue.

About this time, Derschawin gave a great impulse to public taste. He chose, as his theme, the glory of the Russian arms under Catherine, and treated his subject with true poetic fire. The time was now at hand when the literature of Russia was to take a place among the most refined of Europe. This was done under Karamsin, whose great *History of Russia* is one of the most classical performances in any language. It rose at once into universal popularity in his own country, and is now equally esteemed by all the nations of Europe. The honours and rewards heaped upon him by the emperor were endless, and hold out strong encouragement to genius. He began his career as an author by contributions to "The Painter," a satirical journal; and soon after became editor of the *Journal of Moscow*, in which his "Letters of a Travelling Russian" first appeared.

Brief as our notice is, it must not omit Shukoffskij and Batzuskoff. Prince Wiasemskij and Wostokoff are also named with applause. The more recent authors, not already named in this sketch, are, Kosloff, Gribogedoff, Glinka, Baron Delwig, Schazykoff, and Baratsinskij.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOSPITALS AND PUBLIC PRISONS—RUSSIAN PUNISHMENTS.

Splendour of the hospitals—Treatment of patients compared with that in England—Crimes and criminals—Banishment to Siberia—The ~~house~~—Visit to the public prisons—Debtors—Criminals—Boys—Women—Great order—Rooms too much crowded—Diet—Health—The emperor's vigilance.

A GOVERNMENT which has done so much for promoting the education and the taste of the nation, may reasonably be expected not to have forgotten the more incumbent duty of providing for the alleviation of distress among the sick and the poor. We find, accordingly, that the charitable institutions of St. Petersburg are not only very numerous, but also deserve to be reckoned among the most wonderful things in this wonderful empire. Of these, however, so many accounts have already been published, that all we deem it necessary to say concerning them is, that the Hospitals are palaces,—not asylums for the poor. We have never seen any thing to compare with the order, the cleanness, or the comfort of these establishments: they are almost too *fine* for such melancholy purposes.

But though the beds are so white, the label-boards so neat, the little tables with their soup-dish, gruel-bowl, &c., so clean—in short, though there be a great deal of *show*, we were assured by medical men on the spot, that,

in all the *essentials* of hospital treatment, they are far behind our English institutions. All goes on very well till the patient needs some strengthening diet, or any other indulgence out of the common routine. *Then* there is nothing for him. Hence, some private individuals have often been obliged to support a poor patient from their own funds, when wine or expensive medicines were required.

Before saying too much about the order of these places, *the way in which it is enforced* ought to be taken into consideration. When the Emperor Alexander was going through St. Bartholomew's hospital, in London, Sir James Wyllie, or some other of his doctors, drew his attention to a patient peeling potatoes, implying that, *at home*, no such irregular exhibition would ever offend the eye. Very true; but he forgot the reason. A Russian who should be guilty of the smallest deviation from the rules of the hospital would be *scourged* for his offence. Oh happy Russians! It is now the fashion with some to laud everything Russian; but we had rather be a potato-peeler in England, than a Herr Graf with the scourge hanging over us.

A visit to the prisons will also well reward the stranger. Great crimes would appear to be less common in Russia than in many of the other countries of Europe. The number of murders in the whole empire for a single year (1831) is 1271; being at the rate of *one* to every 40,000 inhabitants (taking the estimated amount of the population at the time). Suicides are also rare, having in the same year averaged *one* to 46,200 souls.

The punishment of death is now limited to those who are guilty of the highest kind of high treason. Those convicted of murder and other offences are banished to Siberia, to toil in the mines, salt-works, and government distilleries, some of which kinds of labour are so detrimental to life, that many survive but a very short period after commencing with them. Only the greatest criminals, however, have to work in these fatal places; most of those sent being employed on farms, or located as colonists.*

Convicts may be seen labouring at Cronstadt, and in other towns. These are prisoners condemned for stated periods; and we have heard that not a few of them are Poles! They are dressed in blue-striped trousers, short boots, and whitish jackets, with a black patch on the back.

The terrible punishment of the *knout* is no longer allowed to extend so far as to take away life. This formidable weapon, however, is of such a nature, that the executioner, according to the instructions he has got, can take the culprit's life as nearly as possible, leaving him in such a state that he will not recover for months, if at all. Sometimes it is little more than a severe scourging that is inflicted; but, when the executioner pleases, *four strokes of it* can be made to inflict death. The eulogists of Russia and everything Russian stun us with praises of the mercy of their criminal code, and with songs of triumph about the emperor's clemency; but we see little

* For further information regarding banishment to Siberia, the number of culprits annually sent, and the total number in the country, see vol. ii. chap. vii.

proof of mercy in retaining a mode of torture which is not more gentle than that of flaying alive! There were opportunities for seeing this terrible punishment enforced during our stay in the capital, but we declined the savage sight. Those who have been present tell us that the knout is a whip of three lashes, made of the hardest kind of leather, with burnt knots, &c. The victim is tied against one of the posts of a triangle, raised in some public place, and receives the blows on his back.

On visiting one of the prisons, in which there are generally about 400 prisoners, we found the first range of rooms occupied by debtors belonging to St. Petersburg, and noblemen (so they were called to us) from Finland, confined for minor offences—such as rioting, or being drunk in the streets. The rooms are tolerably clean, but by far too much crowded. The floors are generally of wood, and the walls plastered. The only bed is a piece of wood some two feet wide, with a sloping head, behind which lies a rug that is spread on the naked board at night: blankets are out of the question in a country where, as we have seen, a large portion of the class most likely to be in prison never think of undressing overnight. Eight or ten of these beds may be seen, in two rows, in a room not much more than twenty feet long.

In one room was a flock of boys, teasing hemp, some quite children; most of them sent here for theft. The superintendent could not give us a very distinct answer when we asked whether any attempt is made to educate those who are likely to remain long in confinement; but we understand that there is a class of reading for such.

Debtors are allowed 11 roubles (9*s.* 2*d.*) a-month by their creditors, government, of course, supporting its own debtors.

The opposite side of the well-guarded court is set apart for criminals not yet tried. A convoy leaves every Tuesday with those who have received sentence during the week ; they go away in twos and threes, with a guard to each set, and walk on foot all the way to Siberia—a distance of many thousand miles. The rooms here are lower, and even more crowded than those we had left. The men, as in the others, always rose and ranged themselves as we entered. One was here for stealing 80,000 roubles (more than 3000*l.*) from his father. Generally, these unfortunate men had more the look of imbecility than of villany. It is seldom that prisoners lie very long without receiving sentence ; but there is no limit to the time ;—they cannot force on their trial. Hence one man has been here five years, the proof against him being insufficient : in England, he would have been set at liberty.

So little do the Russians fear having their prison arrangements criticised, that the major explained to us the minutest details : he offered even to show us a poor wretch who had that morning received five blows of the knout, for attempting to assassinate his master, a colonel.

One end of the court is occupied by the female prisoners, of whom there were about a hundred. At the other end of the quadrangle stands the hospital, in which things are very well arranged. The number of sick is always very considerable, but especially in winter, when the jail-fever is so severe that as many as ninety patients are often in the hospital together. The linen,

food, and attendance in this department are all unexceptionable : we have seldom seen any place of the kind in better order.

So far as may be consistent with their safe-keeping, the prisoners are treated with every indulgence. They are allowed abundance of a soup made from peas—varied with the national dish of buck-wheat—and beef, except on fast-days and in Lent. Though there is nothing very offensive in the look of the *rooms*, the *persons* of the prisoners cannot be very clean, when they bathe only on Saturday, and sleep constantly in what they wear.

Debtors may see their relations every day ; criminals can see theirs only on Sundays and holidays. There is a large Greek chapel, and a Lutheran one for foreigners.

On expressing our surprise at finding the prison in much higher order than we had been prepared for, the governor answered, “ We must have it constantly in high order, for fear of the emperor.” He pounces upon them at the most unexpected times—often as early as seven in the morning ! Prison-room, sick-rooms, kitchen, apothecary’s room, all are inspected. But this is only in keeping with the ever-thoughtful vigilance of this extraordinary man, whose character will be more fully appreciated by glancing at the following chapters.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EMPEROR.

Generally represented as cruel and tyrannical—Palliation of the charge—Great interest felt about his character throughout Europe—Importance of the subject—Circumstances under which he came to the throne—Meaning of the titles Tzar, Autocrat, &c.—Miscellaneous anecdotes—Simplicity of his private habits—Happiness with his family—His opinion of the judgment which the English pass on him—The empress and the stranger—His restless activity—Love of military show—Commanding appearance of Nicholas—Fascinating manners—Especially towards foreigners—His desire to conciliate the foreign press—Attention to the French journalist, Monsieur L. W.—Flatteries of French and German writers—Herr Von D——and his book—Attachment of some of the Russian officers—Popular with the soldiers and the people—Mode of saluting him in the streets—His exertions in any public calamity—His noble conduct when cholera appeared—His activity and hardy habits in travelling—His iron bed—His energy not always productive of good—Rogues in office—No sportsman—His style of eloquence—Argument with the French ambassador—His religion—Superstition—Toleration—Not so remarkable as is often stated—Why the Jews are tolerated—Torture—only nominally abolished in Russia—Activity of his police—Spies—Anecdote of an Englishman at Kalisch—Emperor's conduct in regard to the admission of English and French newspapers—*The Morning Post*—*Galigani*—*Journal des Débats*, &c.—German papers—Censorship—Treatment of booksellers—*Byron*—*Books of Travels*, &c.—His restrictions on the stage—A political play.

BEFORE proceeding to state some facts illustrative of the character and policy of the Emperor Nicholas, it is but fair to confess that, like most of our countrymen, we repaired to his dominions with strong prejudices against him. All the accounts of his character current in other parts of Europe are so universally unfavourable, that we

regarded him as a cruel, relentless tyrant, with few redeeming qualities of any kind ; and this, probably, is the idea entertained of him by ninety-nine out of every hundred foreigners who ever heard his name.

Truth, however, compels us to avow that we found reason to modify our opinions concerning him. We will not acquit him from the charge of tyranny, but are now inclined to believe that he is a tyrant from circumstances more than from disposition. He is the slave of a vicious system—tied to a course from which, as yet, he has not been able to break loose. The worst excesses he has been guilty of arise from an ungovernable temper, which, by nature sufficiently strong, has been further strengthened to such a degree by the long exercise of unchecked, uncontrolled authority, that now it often bursts out in the most fatal ebullitions. His defenders assert, however, that when the passing madness has subsided, he is the first to regret, and, if possible, to atone for what has been done. They will not allow that the stern, we might say the cruel system of discipline which prevails in the fleet and the army, and extends to officers as well as privates, can with justice be attributed to him : for it is not of his creating, but has been handed down from the times when Russian officers were really as barbarous as Russian privates ; and he continues it, because, from his military education, he believes it to be the best. In fine, those who know him most intimately assert, that, however violent he may be under the fits of passion alluded to, he is not tyrannical *on system*, or from innate fierceness of disposition.

Let it not be thought, however, that we are the pane-

gyrists of Nicholas. Until a milder policy shall be adopted towards Poland, his faults are too strongly engraved in a nation's wrongs to be blotted out by redeeming traits of a mere private nature, even were these more strong than any that he has hitherto displayed. Yet that his character is not such a complete concentration of unmixed evil as has generally been supposed, will appear from some of the facts now to be adduced.

It is necessary, however, in the very outset to state that it is not here intended to give a complete history, or even a brief memoir of the emperor.* What is aimed at in these pages, is simply to communicate a few facts illustrative of the character of the man on whom the eyes of all Europe are at this moment fixed;—on whom the peace and welfare of the world are more dependent than they ever before were on a single individual, at any period in the long history of human society. The Emperor of Russia has but to say the word, and the flames of war shall burn more universally than they have ever done even in our warlike day—in Europe, in Asia, in America—wherever there is a right to acquire, or a heart to defend. In all parts of the earth, the elements of discord are lying prepared, with a profusion only too un-

* The Emperor Paul, assassinated in 1801, left four sons: *Alexander*, the late emperor, who died at Taganrog on the 1st of December, 1825; *Constantine*, who ought to have succeeded his elder brother, and who died in 1832; *Nicholas*, the present emperor; and the Grand-duke *Michael*, Viceroy of Poland. The present emperor was born July 6, 1796, and in 1817 married Charlotte (on her admission to the Greek church, rebaptized Alexandra Feodorovna), daughter of the King of Prussia. Their family consists of four sons, the oldest born in 1818, and three daughters.

sparing and too ominous : nothing is wanting but the reckless hand to place the torch to the pile, and in one short month the blaze shall be as wide and as fierce, as the fellest enemy of our race could desire.

In attempting, however, to make the public acquainted with the character and the measures of the sovereign in whose hands the temporal weal or woe of humanity are for the time so helplessly placed, the author does not profess to have had access to sources of secret or exclusive information regarding him. Of a *public* nature he has nothing to reveal but what may be learnt by any one moving in good society at St. Petersburg, or among respectable Russians in other parts of Europe ; while of *private* anecdotes—of court calumnies, or of chamber scandal—he has literally none to impart. Even had he been inclined to retail facts of the description last alluded to, there is one good reason why these pages can contain nothing of the kind,—namely, because the author had it not in his power to acquire any personal knowledge of the emperor's habits. Beyond seeing him accidentally in the course of his furious drives, he had no opportunity of approaching his person. This honour, it is believed, he might have obtained with the same facility as other travellers ; but he is now thankful that it was not applied for. Had he been honoured with the private attentions of the emperor, his lips would have been for ever shut regarding him, unless they could have been honestly opened in the same strain of unmingled panegyric which all travellers take up in speaking of him. Completely untrammelled, however, by the ties which personal kindness would have imposed, the author is at

liberty to speak plainly and frankly; giving the emperor all credit for what is praiseworthy in his character and measures, and censuring, without reserve, whatever appears to be blameable in the same.

It may be proper to remind the reader, that Nicholas, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias,* is *third* son of the unfortunate Paul, and that he succeeded to the throne on the death of Alexander, in consequence of some arrangement made by that emperor for the exclusion of

* Such is the title by which the sovereigns of Russia are now generally designated. In the time of Peter the Great, his claim to the title of emperor was the subject of many years' negotiation between him and the different courts of Europe. It was asserted, that though his predecessors had been styled Emperors of Muscovy, yet the European powers never meant thereby to give him a title corresponding in dignity to that of the Emperor of Germany. After many difficulties, however, it was agreed to style him emperor, but without prejudice to the other crowned heads of Europe. The phrase "*all the Russias*," is allusive, to the ancient divisions of Little, Great, White, Black, and Red Russia, now all united under the general name of the Russian Empire. *Autocrat* is composed of two Greek words, meaning *sole ruler*. The title of Czar—the pronunciation of which is better represented in English by the spelling *Tzar*, or *Tsar*—by which the emperor is also frequently designated, is not, as has been supposed, a corruption of the word *Cæsar*, but a Slavonic term, signifying *King*. That the title of Czar has no connexion with, and was deemed inferior to that of *Cæsar*, is proved by a fact in the life of the celebrated character known in history by the name of the false Demetrius. When this bold personage assumed the title of Czar, it was readily recognised and confirmed by his protector the King of Poland. But when he went still farther, and claimed the appellation of *Cæsar*, even the complacent Sigismund indignantly refused to gratify his vanity so far. The historian of Peter the Great, referring to the regions where this title was first known, such as Kasan, Siberia, and Astracan, remarks that the title is much more probably derived from the *Tschahs* of Persia, than from the *Cæsars* of Rome, of whom, in all likelihood, the Tzars of Siberia had never heard on the banks of the Oby.

his *second* brother Constantine, who was still alive. Alexander has been much blamed for sanctioning an arrangement directly subversive of those very principles of legitimacy for which he had made so many sacrifices throughout his long reign; but in Russia it was no new thing to pass over the direct heir, in favour of one better qualified to govern: for the greatest emperor who ever reigned over it, Peter the Great himself, was called to the throne in the same way, Fœdor having named him his successor, to the exclusion of Ivan, the rightful heir, who, from weakness of intellect, was deemed incapable of governing. In both cases, demonstrations were made in favour of the disinherited. Ivan was for some time regarded as sovereign by one party, but soon gave way to his more energetic brother; and Constantine was proclaimed at Warsaw, as well as supported by a revolt of a portion of the guard, and of the populace of St. Petersburg.

The energy displayed by Nicholas in subduing this rebellion has continued to characterise the whole of his conduct ever since. There is nothing, however, either in the attainments or measures of the Tzar to justify his admirers in holding him up as a man of extraordinary, nay, almost superhuman talent. That he possesses restless activity of mind and body—and in a degree, which in a monarch may be not unnaturally mistaken for genius—no one will deny; but we have never discovered in him any other qualities that entitle him to be considered as much above the ordinary average of human character, and certainly none that can entitle him to be pronounced, as he has sometimes been, the greatest genius, the master

spirit, of our age. His most prominent qualities, we should say, are decision and firmness; quickness in devising expedients to meet the unforeseen emergencies of the moment, and steadiness in enforcing them. Next to these, is the excess of his passion for reducing everything to military uniformity. This propensity degenerates almost to a weakness: it is his great aim to give the whole empire the appearance of an encampment. This passion is so well known, that the very children in the streets are made to affect the air military, strutting about in a white cap with red band *à l'empereur*. On entering a school, the boys and girls rise in files, to salute you after the military fashion, and march out as if wheeling to the sound of fife and drum. In the very prisons a dash of the corporal's discipline is visible; and even in the hospitals, you would say the old nurses ape the imperial guard.

The emperor's private habits and general style of living are extremely simple; and the delight which he takes in the society of his children is boundless. Those who have seen the imperial family in their private moments, when free from the constraint of pomp and ceremony to which princes are slaves before the world, speak of them in terms of rapture. An English gentleman who was honoured with many opportunities of entering the august circle, says that more happiness, more affection, more simplicity, it would be impossible to conceive. The unconstrained and innocent amusements of their evenings, contrasted delightfully with the notions usually formed of imperial family scenes. In short, from all that he beheld, it appeared that a kinder husband or a better father than Nicholas does not exist. The emperor, too

quick not to perceive what was passing in the mind of his guest as he mused on the scene before him, said one evening, stamping his foot and grinding his teeth, as the unpleasant thought rose to his mind, " I know that I am unpopular in England. They *hate* me—because they think me a tyrant; but if they knew me, they would not call me so. They should see me in the bosom of my family !" The way in which the imperial family live at some of the country palaces, is also extremely unostentatious, as may appear from the following anecdote.

A stranger, who was rambling on the shores of the bay near Peterhof, entered the grounds of what he took to be the villa of some nobleman employed in the neighbouring palace. Meeting with no obstruction in the beautiful walks, he explored them in every direction, and was at last proceeding to get round to the other side of the mansion, to a position where he expected to enjoy an extensive sea-view. In order to effect his object, it was necessary to come nearer the windows than he had intended. At one of them, which was open, with a rich flower-plot before it, sat a lady dressed in the simplest white, and holding in her hand a book, which fortunately engrossed her attention so deeply, that he was able to withdraw without disturbing her. Until he came on the sentinel, whom he had not previously seen, he never suspected that the lady on whom he had been allowed to intrude, and whom he had seen surrounded with as little pomp as a private gentlewoman, was none else than the empress herself.

In person the emperor is tall and well made. Few men of his height (six feet two inches) display such grace

and freedom of carriage. In fact, his appearance is so superior, that many have bestowed upon him the wide and not easily disputed compliment of being "the handsomest man in Europe." Being one of the best horsemen of the time, he is never seen to more advantage than when mounted on his favourite steed. Accustomed to command, and to see his commands obeyed with crouching submission, he has acquired the air and mien of majesty more completely than any sovereign of the age. His eye has a singular power: its fierce glance can awe the turbulent, and, it is said, has disarmed the assassin. His manners, however, are far from those of the despot; nothing can be more winning than his attentions, where he wishes to please. No man ever seemed to possess more strongly the power of removing, from those who have access to him, the prejudices which may have been previously entertained against him. The Russians, it is said, see little of his fascinating powers; towards them he dare not be familiar without exciting jealousies which would be fatal to the empire. It is on strangers, passing visitors, that he lavishes his amiability, for with them it can be done without danger, and he is too anxious to stand well with the rest of Europe to allow a foreigner to leave him under an unfavourable impression. Never was even imperial flattery more successful in attaining its aim: the raptures with which his condescension, his frankness, his courtesy, are spoken of by all who come near him, would indicate that it is not merely the *emperor* but the *man* who triumphs.

The length to which he goes in order to secure friends, and the success of his blandishments, were shown in one

instance which was much talked of during our stay in his capital. Monsieur L. W——, a French author of some repute, and well known as a contributor to the *Journal des Débats*, had arrived shortly before us, charged of course to overflowing with all the prejudices of a French *libéral* against the Emperor and Russia. Some said that the talented Alsacian had been sent by M. Thiers, the prime minister of the time, to spy the nakedness of the land, and to send him information regarding it; but it is much more probable that he was travelling “on his own account,” to pick up hints for a tale or two, or matter for a few *vaudevilles*, of which the scene should be laid in Russia, which country was for a time the favourite field of action with M. Scribe and his rivals. At the same time, like a prudent *feuilletoniste* of the well-paying *Journal*, he may have kept a sharp outlook for any thing which would furnish good “articles” for the home-market; and, in fact, the Parisians had soon the pleasure of perusing some very excellent letters of his from St. Petersburg.

Let the object of his journey, however, have been what it may, Nicholas soon heard of him through the French ambassador, M. de Barante, who, himself a distinguished man of letters, was anxious to render every service to a brother in talent. Soon after, all St. Petersburg was amazed to see the emperor paying attention to a French *littérateur*, a “liberal” too, and connected with the very *Débats* which had recently made the violent attack on the emperor’s famous Warsaw speech. Not satisfied with conversing with him freely and confidentially in the palace, the condescending monarch

was to be seen walking with him in the gardens for a whole hour together, and sent one of his *aides-de-camp* to show him every thing of interest about the capital. Many rumours were instantly abroad on this marvellous subject; but the favourite one was, that the emperor, anxious to reconquer that popularity with the other nations of Europe which his brother Alexander had enjoyed, was about to establish at St. Petersburg another newspaper, in the French language, of which this experienced stranger should be editor, on a handsome salary. The *Journal de Francfort*, faithful and talented though it be, is not answering all the purposes for which it is retained;—for it is now and then under the necessity of advocating Prince Metternich's interests, which do not always agree with those of Count Nesselrode. In these circumstances, the establishment of a newspaper, under such a gifted editor, appeared to the eager *habitués* of the fashionable *salons* a most advisable scheme. But the emperor thought otherwise. He knew how to turn his visiter's talents to better account. He gained his affections—removed his prejudices—made him *his own*; not by bribery, but by the more efficient influence of condescension and kindness;—then, having done all this, sent him where his good opinions would be of more use to the emperor than in Russia—to write and speak favourably of him in France and throughout Europe. So efficiently had he removed his anti-Russian notions, that the next thing we heard of this French convert, was a report from Moscow that he had won the heart and the hand of the daughter of a Russian nobleman in that city. Nay, the emperor's triumph went further:—with such

force had he reasoned with him on the sins and follies of liberalism, that, when he returned to France, Louis-Philippe found him completely cured, and has since given him a good diplomatic appointment at one of the German courts.

That hour's walk in the imperial garden has made M. L—W—'s fortune; but we should be sorry to see him becoming as great a flatterer of the emperor as his countryman, Voltaire, was of another Russian sovereign, who had managed him so well, that he gravely wrote of her, “ *Une Impératrice vient de donner à ce vaste état des lois qui auraient fait honneur à Minos, à Numa, et à Solon, s'ils avaient eu assez d'esprit pour les inventer !! La plus remarquable est la tolérance universelle ; la seconde est l'abolition de la torture.*”

To these two reforms we shall have occasion to allude hereafter; the passage is now quoted merely for the sake of reminding the reader that the formula contained in it has served for all French writers on Russia, from the day it first appeared down to our own. Frenchmen of all descriptions—literary men and soldiers—from Voltaire to Marshal Marmont, have always been the warmest eulogists of Russia. It is among them that the emperor still finds the readiest agents for circulating through Europe all the fine things we see in the journals about him from time to time.

When necessary, however, Nicholas can command flatterers from other nations. An excellent instance of the use he makes of these is afforded by the recent work of Herr von D——, which is so completely crammed with fulsome praise of Nicholas and everything Russian, that,

unless for the information received from friends of the author, we could not have believed the description which he gives of himself in the title-page: *Prussian*, we thought, must have been inserted by mistake for *Russian* counsellor, &c., since no Russian ever could have gone farther in praise of the autocrat and his doings. Its flattery, in fact, is so gross, that in Germany the origin and object of the book were at once detected; but in England, where we are less quick at discovering the emperor's agency, it has been honoured with a translation, and by some readers, perhaps, esteemed valuable as the unbiassed testimony of a liberal foreigner to the excellence of all things Russian. The useful D—— will soon be promoted for his book. While in Russia, he was notorious for his outrageous admiration of everything done, doing, or to be done, in that happy land.

These facts are mentioned to put the public on their guard about all works in which Russia is too vehemently praised; though written by foreigners, they are usually brought out under the kind of influence now explained. The emperor knows well what authors to give his diamond rings too; and if they praise Russia well, he has more substantial rewards than these, the common gifts presented to foreigners who send their books to him.

Being himself thus polite towards foreigners, the emperor very reasonably expects equal politeness on their part. Nay, one who presumes too far is soon brought to his senses. A Prussian officer, who probably thought that in St. Petersburg a Prussian might do as he pleased, one day joined the *cortège* at a review, without having

previously been at court, and was riding about as active as the best of them, till arrested by a message from the emperor, ordering him off the field, with the explanation that he was at all times proud to see foreigners present on such occasions, but thought that they might take the trouble of making themselves known to him before coming there.

When inclined, the emperor succeeds in gaining the affections of his own subjects as completely as those of foreigners. He knows well how to reward fidelity and to inspire enthusiasm. Hence, though not generally popular with the officers of his army, there are some who love him to excess. A young nobleman, of most amiable and winning manners, often said to us, "My brother is toiling in Siberia, a hopeless exile. He was concerned in the revolt which broke out at the emperor's accession. Others of my family are suffering wrong. Yet I love the emperor as much as my own father. How could it be otherwise? Look at these decorations; they were given me from his own hand. He has never allowed an opportunity to pass without rewarding me for anything I had done to merit his notice; and once, when I had pleased him by the rapidity with which I had raised a corps of recruits to a high state of discipline, he asked me to allow his young son the honour of being enrolled in my troop. These may be trifles to some, but to me they are links that bind me to him with a force which nothing can break." A little more of this conduct, and he might have the most faithful army in Europe.

With the common soldiers he is highly popular; but it is, above all, among the *mooziks*, the good-hearted

fellows with the beards and sheepskins—in other words, it is by the great body of the people—that he is most beloved. He never appears in public without being greeted by rapturous welcome as soon as he is discovered: until our own fair queen ascended the throne, there was no sovereign in Europe whose appearance was hailed with such joy by the people. Individual cases of oppression are overlooked in his general kindness. His anxiety to find out, and generosity in rewarding humble merit, go far in reconciling the poor to his political measures. He is also kind and familiar with them on all public occasions: at the great summer *fête* of Peterhof, where thousands of the people are assembled, he dances and capers amongst them, as merry and free as any goat of them all.

The Russian passion about taking off hats has been already mentioned: the emperor is not without his share of it. The way of saluting him when he passes you in the streets, is, to English ideas, sufficiently slavish. We are not speaking of the mob, but of gentlemen, who, on such occasions, are compelled to pull up straight and stiff on the pavement—like a frightened Prussian recruit saluting his officer—facing towards his majesty, and there standing, hat in hand, till the carriage has passed. Some of the ambassadors even have adopted this observance; but we should think that an Englishman, gentle or noble, behaves with sufficient respect, when he salutes the emperor as he would his own sovereign. If it were a Ho-Tung-Fo, or any barbarian who did not know better, there would be some reason for conforming to the innocent exaggerations of his people.

In cases of public calamity, no one is more sympathizing than the emperor. When a fire occurs, he is sure to be among the first on the spot. Indeed, the way in which he exposes himself on such occasions is surprising. Fear seems to be unknown to him. Many instances could be given of his courage; but never was it more advantageously shown than at the time the cholera broke out in Moscow. It was in that city, as all may remember, that this dreadful scourge first showed itself to any alarming extent in Europe. It had crept slowly up from Asia by the Volga to Nishnei-Novgorod, and thence spread to the second capital of Russia. As yet, little was known of a disease which even now mocks all science: it was looked upon as a new and more fatal form of the plague. The people were flying in terror. Even the medical men were appalled, and the sick were left without nurse or medicine. At last, these tidings reached the emperor's ears. Without a moment's hesitation he threw himself into his droschky, and posted off to Moscow—visited the sufferers—touched them—went from bed to bed—tasted the medicines—cheered—reprimanded—placed ample funds at the disposal of the authorities;—and by all these decisive steps at once allayed the panic which was giving new violence to a malady that needs but little aggravation. Courage of this kind is of a higher character, and more useful to society, than any that was ever shown on the field of battle.

When the epidemic reached St. Petersburg, he again showed the same heroism, exposing himself in every place where his presence could give confidence; and in

this instance his conduct is even still more worthy of admiration, from the fact that, in the interval, he had himself suffered from a very severe attack of the disease. This was not made public at the time ; but we are assured of its truth from one who has been informed of it by his majesty's private physician.

Of his presence of mind, and readiness of devising means in the moment of difficulty, many instances might be given. But on this subject it will be sufficient to recall his conduct during the revolt in favour of Constantine, which, as already stated, was at once put down by the promptitude with which he met it. Many say that in punishing the guilty he showed greater mildness than could have been expected.

His health is of the most robust kind, being, doubtless, greatly aided by the activity of his habits. He thinks nothing of accomplishing in a couple of weeks a journey which ordinary people would take months to perform. Indeed, generally, among Russians, distance is never taken into calculation when there is question of travelling. In setting out on a five-hundred miles' excursion, therefore, as if it were but a drive to dinner, the emperor is but doing what most of his subjects would do. The people of St. Petersburg always know when he is in the capital, by looking whether the flag be flying on the palace or not : it is hoisted only when the emperor is there. Some mornings, when it has unexpectedly disappeared, they will be told that he is already many hundred miles away, having started in the night in consequence of some sudden intelligence. After the reviews of Kalisch, he posted off through Silesia, and Bohemia, and was in the

chambers of the imperial family at Vienna, before a courier could have arrived to announce his visit. About the time we were leaving Russia, he accomplished a tour to Moscow and Nishnei-Novgorod; then, after visiting Kasan and many of the eastern provinces, came to Little Russia, holding reviews and levees at a great many places by the way; yet he was back again in the capital, from this three or four thousand miles survey, within a few weeks.

He is the only Russian emperor whose travelling habits ever corresponded with the extent of his dominions: he drives literally *ventre-à-terre*, and seldom fails to accomplish twelve miles an hour, even on the unmade roads of the south. His path is generally marked by dead horses. On these occasions he never encumbers himself with retinue or escort: his own light droschky, with six horses, and a similar vehicle following with an *aide-de-camp*, ready to be sent off right or left, constitute the whole of the imperial train.

For such an impetuous traveller, railroads are the only suitable paths. He has, accordingly, already got one formed between St. Petersburg and Tzarkoï-Celo (opened since we left Russia), and talks of continuing it all the way to Moscow. There being already, however, a beautiful macadamized road on this long line, it is not likely that he will actually attempt a railroad also; but it is highly probable that the first roads which will ever be established in the other parts of the empire, especially to the south and east of Moscow, where there are now no roads worthy of the name, will be railways, for which the level nature of the country makes it highly suitable.

Russia sometimes gains by being behind her neighbours. She has waited long for roads: but may now, at once, get the very best. Notwithstanding the parade made in Germany and France about railways, there have been greater wonders than that: Russia though she talks less about it, may still get before them in the march of iron.

The emperor's habits in travelling, as indeed at all times, are extremely simple. He eats but little, and always of the plainest. The bed carried with him on these occasions is far from being too luxurious. It is similar to those seen in his bedrooms in the palaces, consisting simply of a hard mattress, on a light iron frame, exceedingly narrow. He carried the same kind of bed all through England. Though sufficiently small and uninviting, it is not quite so uncomfortable as the short fir-wood crib of his good father-in-law, the King of Prussia.

In consequence of his quick movements, he has a way of arriving even at distant places *earlier* than had been announced,—sometimes several days sooner. And then loud is the song of praise and of wonder. “Oh, what a wonderful emperor! what a great man!” will the courtier cry. “Who but the emperor could travel 300 versts in twenty hours?” echoes the diplomatist. After all, it is but the greatness of a courier.

These rapid journeys surprise nobody but the honest; the rogues are never taken unawares. He thinks to catch people napping by his flights; but those whose consciences tell them that they have need to be afraid of him, are never unprepared. Knowing, from experience the suddenness of his movements, they are invariably be-

forehand with him at any place of meeting. All the dishonest are linked hand in hand, and take care to give each other early intimation of their master's motions. But the honest, who are neither intriguers nor defaulters, and do not choose to pay for information of this kind, are generally too late on these occasions. There was a good instance of this while we were in the south : the emperor arrived at a place of rendezvous some days sooner than had been announced : Count ——, an honest man, was too late to see him ; but M. le Comte de ——, a rogue, was in great good time. Which of the two would be set down as the most zealous servant of the state ?

The emperor's personal interference in almost every kind of business, though in general productive of good, occasionally does harm : it paralyses those who act under him. When any sudden emergency arises, they never know how far to go. For instance, in the frequent case of fire in the capital, little can be done if the emperor is not on the spot ; and even when he is present, people are afraid to do more than they are commanded. A melancholy instance of this occurred not long before we reached St. Petersburg. A large wooden booth, a sort of playhouse, had been erected near the palace, during the festivities of the Maslenitsa, or Butter Week, a kind of popular festival, which represents the carnival of southern countries, and is enjoyed by the lower classes as the great season for balls, masquerades, and rioting of every kind. While the performances were going on in broad daylight, this structure suddenly took fire, and the destruction was so rapid, that more than a hundred people—(we have heard the num-

ber raised to several hundreds ; for in this, as in every thing of a disagreeable nature, the newspapers are never allowed to tell the whole truth)—were killed before they could be extricated. Yet, gentlemen who were on the spot, assert that it would have been possible to have rescued the whole assembly, merely by tearing off the boards outside, in place of leaving the ill-fated revellers to be suffocated in the narrow passages, of which the doors were kept shut by the very weight of the crowd rushing towards them for escape. When these spectators made a proposal to this effect to the policemen standing by, they beat the meddlers back with their axes : the *emperor had not given instructions* to tear off the boards, and if any thing went wrong in the attempt, the officers would have been *punished for going beyond orders* !

With all the fierce restlessness of disposition, which we have spoken of as characterizing the emperor, he might be expected to be passionately fond of what is considered the favourite amusement of kings and tyrants, the chase ; but it appears that he has never followed hound nor horn.

Though his majesty has not cultivated the graces of eloquence, he is said to be both quick and persuasive in argument. Unaccustomed to opposition, however, he is apt to let himself be carried away by passion when contradicted, or when speaking on a subject that rouses his feelings. This was strikingly shown in his famous oration at Warsaw, in the spring of 1836—*the first public speech he ever made* : the Poles, at least, will not be sorry should it be his *last* display of the kind. It was

quite unprepared ; but being on a subject that touched him keenly, he spoke fluently and impressively.

He is so apt to be carried away by passion in debate, that words often entirely fail him. He has a way, however, of filling up the pause : in an interview with the French ambassador, the discussion became so warm that his majesty, chafed by opposition, at last, in the agony of unwilling words, summed up his arguments very intelligibly, by striking his hand with great violence on the table—a most impressive figure of speech. On another occasion, when hard pressed for a good argument, he rushed to the window, threw it open, and, pointing significantly to some regiments exercising below, clenched his reasoning with the words, “ *Voilà ma garde ; ce n'est que la vingtième partie de mon armée !* ” The emperor knew well that, after all, force is the best *ultima ratio* of kings.

Though not an enemy to literature nor to literary men, he is not distinguished by any particular taste for letters. His attainments, however, in all useful branches of knowledge,—history, science, languages,—are highly respectable. The only one of the imperial family spoken of as being at all literary, is the Grand-duke Michael, who is said to have written some able remarks, chiefly political, suggested by a visit to Naples many years since.

So far as can be judged by mere outward acts, the emperor's respect for religion is very great. His devoutness while in church is extreme. Some say his part is here overacted ; for there is no end to the bowings and

salutations between him and the officiating clergy when the service is over. No saint's-day, or formality of the church, is ever neglected by him; and in travelling, he never passes a steeple without crossing himself as devoutly as the yemtchik who drives him. The fervour of his superstition, if not of his devotion, is well shown by a recent act, which is spoken of with great applause by the priests. He has added a new saint to the calendar. It appears that some holy man, who lived a hundred years ago, had left this earth in all the odour of sanctity, but, amid the more exciting subjects which occupied men's minds at that time, his fame was soon forgotten. Lately, however, wonderful things had been performed near the place where he lies interred, in the Government of Voronezh: a talk went forth of the sick being cured, the lame restored, merely by visiting the favoured spot. All this, in due course, came to the ear of the emperor, who forthwith canonized him; and now, to the great edification of the ignorant, his bones are performing miracles every day, among the thousands who are flocking to the shrine.

Of the emperor's toleration in matters of religion, which has been very loudly vaunted, we cannot speak in such enthusiastic terms as many have done. It is true, that under him all sects and religions are tolerated, as they long have been in Russia, but that members of other sects are promoted with the same rapidity as those of the Greek church is not true. No one is *compelled* to join the predominant religion; but there is profit in belonging to it notwithstanding. Is it any proof of tolerance on the part of the Russians, to demand that a

foreign princess, on allying herself to the emperor, must be baptized into the Greek church, and assume a new name commemorative of the rite? It was a severe trial to the protestant King of Prussia, to see his daughter abandoning her faith, even though she did it to win such dazzling honours.

This narrow-minded policy of the royal family of Russia is now placed in a stronger light, by the liberality of the royal family of France, who, although themselves strict Roman Catholics, have cordially welcomed to their bosom the amiable protestant princess who will one day wear a crown not less brilliant than that of the Empress of all the Russias.

The emperor also gets great credit for his liberality to the Jews. In fact, any one who will not sing the praises of this liberal despot is now set down as an enemy to human improvement. Strange liberality, truly, under the cloak of which iniquities innumerable are committed every day. Beneath the merit of a little good, Russia is allowed to perpetrate a great deal of evil. Toleration is one of the most praiseworthy characteristics in the policy of any state; but we must not allow it to blind us to great errors and great cruelties. But, after all, what is this boasted toleration of Russia? Before we can raise our admiration of it to the required pitch, she must carry her toleration a little further. At present it implies a most complete abnegation of all political rights on the part of those who are to be tolerated. To become its objects, men must cease to think like men. The Jews are favoured by the emperor, because, as is well known, they never interfere in affairs of government.

Give them opportunity of making money, of carrying on their traffic, and they live as happy under a despotism, as under the freest government that could be framed. Yet, even as regards the toleration manifested toward the Jews in Russia, it should be borne in mind that it is only very lately that they were placed on the more advantageous footing which they at present occupy. Prior to the promulgation of the famous Ukase of 1835, which defined their rights more precisely, none could have told what was their exact position. They can now study at the Universities, take degrees, &c. But even with all these high-sounding liberalities before us—and the emperor takes good care to have them duly trumpeted through Europe—we deny that the indulgence of the Russian government to the Jews is by any means of that generous nature which many suppose. Should we call it toleration in England were the government to say to the Jews, “Get out from amongst us: we give you a certain portion of country in the bleakest and most uncultivated corner of the empire; go thither, all the twelve thousand of you, and render it fertile by your industry:—pay your taxes, multiply your race, and get rich if you can; but not one of you shall we allow to live in the capital, or even in some of the counties, on the same footing with Christians?”

In English ears, this, we are persuaded, would sound very unlike toleration. Yet such is the toleration we have been taught to praise in the Russian government. For it is notorious, that though in some districts—those which the government is anxious to colonize, and can get nobody else to go to—they enjoy the immunities

above alluded to; yet in certain provinces—Bialystock, for instance, where there are many Jews—they are treated as a degraded race, and are expressly prohibited by law from leaving their villages, or settling in any town of the district; and it is equally well known that no Jews, except a few of great wealth, are allowed to settle in St. Petersburg and some other cities of the empire.

It might also be asked, whether there be much toleration in compelling the Jews to serve in the army—nay, in the navy, too—driving them like wild beasts, with chains on their limbs, and the whip at their shoulders, to enter professions to which, as is well known, they have never been accustomed, and which they mortally abhor.

The abolition of the torture, at an earlier period even than in France and some other countries, is another point for which Russia has long received much praise. What a liberal, what a marvellous country! But this, like the praise of her tolerant spirit, is also somewhat exaggerated. That the torture has been *nominally* abolished cannot be denied; but for torture read *knout*, and the practice still exists as vigorously as ever. When the prisoners, arrested on suspicion, are knouted *to make them confess*, what is it but torture with a different name?

Many assert that the emperor's sentiments on political matters are much more liberal than has usually been represented or expected. If this be true, he is inconsistent in repressing all freedom of opinion so severely among his subjects. Benkendorf, the head of the police, aids him most powerfully in this work. Political associations or meetings, however secretly conducted, are soon dis-

covered, and mercilessly put down. It is said that he has his spies in every place. Few private parties can be held without some one being present to repeat what is said. All places frequented by foreigners, such as *tables-d'hôte*, hotels, &c., have a well-dressed spy or two appended to them, who keep watch over the conversation of the guests, and note those with whom they associate.

That the Russian police is not to be tampered with was shown by its conduct on a recent occasion to a distinguished Englishman, commanding the armies of one of the greatest powers in the East. During the last reviews at Kalisch, Sir ———, then on his way to London, turned off from the direct route through Gallicia and Silesia, in order to witness a sight which could not but possess unusual interest for a soldier. Being a man of very remarkable personal appearance, he soon attracted the attention of the police at Kalisch. Inquiries were made about his object in visiting the place. He referred to his passport as a sufficient security for his character; but was answered that a *special* permission was necessary for all coming there. Having no further papers to tell much about him, the affair began to look serious. Arrest and worse consequences were threatened, when he at length thought of appealing, as an Englishman, to the Duke of Cumberland. His royal highness, however, refused to have any thing to do with him; so that matters now looked more suspicious than ever. In the eyes of the impartial police, there could no longer be any doubt that the tall stranger had come there on some conspiracy, and must be dealt with accordingly. Fortunately, however, just when extreme measures were about to be

resorted to, he learnt that there was another English nobleman among the visitors,—one to whom even the humblest of his countrymen could never have appealed in vain,—the late Duke of Gordon; who at once exerted all his influence to free the stranger from his awkward position, and made the emperor himself acquainted with his real character. Thanks to the Duke, the gallant soldier was now honoured with every attention, and urged to take that share in the martial festivities to which his rank and reputation entitled him. But if the story as we had it at Constantinople be correct, he was so indignant at the treatment he had previously received, that even imperial entreaties could not induce him to remain an instant after he had fully vindicated his character.

In nothing is the vigilance of the emperor's police more actively displayed, than in its severity in all that concerns the press. Books, and publications of every kind, are under the strictest censorship. Not a line can be printed, not even the prices of tallow and sugar, without the permission of government. As to any thing like free discussion in the newspapers, it is out of the question in a country where, as already mentioned, few newspapers are allowed except the official organs of the ministry. In regard to the admission of *foreign* journals, however, there is more liberality than we were prepared for. All the German newspapers of any repute are to be seen at the clubs: such as the *Staats-Zeitung*, the *Allgemeine-Zeitung*, the *Hamburger Correspondent*, the *Börsen-Halle*, with its *Critische Blätter*, the *Journal für Ausländische Litteratur*, and the *Freimüthige*, some of which, as is well known, often contain articles of a liberal

tendency. The only French newspaper which we met with was the *Journal des Débats*; and the only English one permitted in public places is the *Morning Post*. *Galighani's Messenger*, which had formerly been admitted, was excluded about the time of our visit, to the great regret of the English, who found it by far the most useful of all the continental papers. Yet as each number was carefully examined at the post-office, and kept back if it contained anything unpalatable to the government, many of its readers found it much less tantalizing to be without it altogether. Foreign newspapers of all kinds are generally detained many hours at the post-office, to give time for their perusal before being delivered. Such is the jealousy of the authorities, that even in private English families we saw few of our newspapers. *Chambers's Journal*, and some other periodicals, which do not deal in politics, are admitted.

In general, however, English books do not seem to be very strictly prohibited. At Dixon's, the English bookseller, we found copies of nearly all the English works reprinted on the continent; that is to say, everything worth reading. Brieff, one of the most respectable publishers in St. Petersburg, receives most of the new French works; and it is said that none of the importers of books are much troubled by the censor, government having a general confidence in their honour, which of course they take care not to abuse. Books of travels that treat of Russia, especially English ones, are very severely prohibited, unless they contain nothing but praise of the emperor and his people. Yet others, sometimes, find their way in. *Byron* is strictly forbidden: he made too

-free with Russia in some of his poems, and said too much about that troublesome thing liberty, to be a favourite with the police. In spite of all their care, however, we heard of many a smuggled copy of him in German,—which everybody can read who reads at all. He is the favourite poet of the Russians.

Knowing that the stage is also under a strict censorship, we were not a little surprised to see a piece performed, which, though we could not understand the dialogue, was evidently very severe on the malpractices of some government functionaries. It is called the *Reviser*; and is meant as a satire on the practice of taking bribes, which is so prevalent among Russian functionaries. A young spendthrift, reduced to his last sixpence, is mistaken in a provincial town, to which he had removed, for the important personage sent down to *revise* the accounts of tax-collectors, government contractors, &c. No sooner has this misapprehension become general than his prospects are completely changed. Wealth, in the shape of bribes, pours in upon him so fast, that he knows not how to dispose of it. One person offers him a hundred pounds to let his books pass unexamined. Another brings double the sum to purchase his silence about an acknowledged deficit. A third great man puts his castles and horses at his disposal; and a fourth gives him his choice of his daughters in marriage, with the promise of a rich dowry to increase the charms of the favoured fair. In short, all goes so prosperously, that our hopeful youth, from being the most despairing, begins to be the most arrogant of men. Yet such things, it appears, are too common in Russia not to be understood and relished

by the poor taxpayers, at whose expense all this is done.

Now all this freedom on the part of a dramatist surprised us greatly in a country where we did not expect to hear the smallest allusion on the stage, at least in the way of censure, to anything connected with government ; but the mystery was solved, when we are assured that, numerous and powerful though they be, the class alluded to in this piece had not been able to procure its suppression, for the very good reason that it had found favour in the eyes of the emperor, who comes to laugh at it as often as any grumbling liberal in all St. Petersburg. He patronises it because it aids him in a part of his policy, which will be discussed after we have offered a few remarks on the influence which the example of the court exercises on the nobles of the empire.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INFLUENCE OF THE COURT.

Great improvement in the morals of the Russian nobles—Chiefly attributable to the empress—Way in which she has produced the change—Splendour of the court entertainments—Banquets—Receptions—Most honoured guests—Effect which her example has had on the education of the daughters of the nobility—Great pains taken with her own family—The emperor's attention to the education of his sons—Its influence on that of the young nobles—Many Germans of princely rank visit the court—Prince Maximilian of Leuchtenberg—Motives of the emperor in choosing him to be his son-in-law—His character—The extravagance of the court injurious as an example to the nobles—Their burdens—Painful reflections on witnessing the splendour of the palaces.

FROM having been the most profligate of all the courts of Europe, the imperial circle of St. Petersburg has now become the purest and most exemplary. The world has not yet forgotten the foul tales with which the very mention of some of the Muscovite sovereigns was once invariably associated ; but, happily, at the imperial court of the present day it is now as fashionable to be virtuous, as it was in the days of other rulers to be immoral.

The emperor himself deserves a great share of the merit of having accomplished this much-needed reform in Russian manners ; for, whatever may be the truth of the whispers regarding his private conduct, it is undeniable that in public he has at all times most strenuously discountenanced every tendency to open licentiousness or impropriety among the members of his court.

Of the merit of this good work, however, the greatest share is due to the amiable and high-minded empress. Brought up amid the bitter but wholesome lessons of adversity, the daughter of the ill-fated Queen of Prussia carried with her to the throne those principles of true morality and religion which, when they once have been firmly rooted, can neither be shaken by misfortune nor deadened by prosperity. She had not long been raised to an elevation whose splendours would have dazzled a more ordinary or a less religious mind, and deprived it perhaps of that delicate perception of right and wrong which in lower station might have remained unimpaired, before she discovered that many things in the manners and conduct of the Russian nobles greatly needed amelioration. Under the correct and exemplary reign of the Emperor Alexander, a change for the better had already begun to appear; but it had only begun. There was still wanting to the wives of the Russian nobility the sanctifying influence of a pure female court; an example of correctness in the first lady of the empire. This they had now obtained, in one who knew well the mighty extent of the influence, either for good or for evil, which her elevated station conferred, and who, at the same time, was not ignorant that there were dangers as well as difficulties awaited her, in attempting to bring about a change among those who had hitherto never heard the voice of entreaty, far less that of reproof.

Sincerely impressed, however, with a sense of the necessity which existed for a reform, the empress was determined to spare no effort in the noble task which she had assumed. The only question with her was, how

could the laudable object best be accomplished? It was here that the strong good sense of the empress came to the aid of her zeal. A less judicious reformer of manners and morals, invested like her with almost boundless power for carrying her wishes into effect, would have thought only of the way in which that power could be most violently employed in accomplishing her wishes. But in place of prohibitions and proscriptions, she chose the gentler and more persuasive method of reforming by *example*; a course which was the more effectual, that in Russia good example from an empress had unhappily been but too rare.

It is, then, by a strict adherence to propriety in her own conduct, and firmness in refusing to countenance those, however high their rank, who had become noted for levity, that the excellent Alexandra Feodorovna has at length succeeded in making her court the resort of morality without hypocrisy, and of decorum without moroseness.

During the season at which we visited Russia the court is not held at St. Petersburg. It is only in winter that it is seen in its full magnificence. All that the empire contains of noble and wealthy are then drawn to the capital, by the gorgeous festivities which are continued without intermission, till the return of summer again permits the imperial family to enjoy the comforts and tranquillity of country life.

The entertainments given at the court are on a scale of splendour surpassing all that is now to be seen in any other part of the world. We have heard a member of one of the royal families of Germany say, that the mar-

vels which he had witnessed in the Winter Palace could only be compared to the fictions of the Arabian Nights. The wide and beautiful entrances lined with crowds of attendants in the richest liveries—staircases of the whitest marble glittering with men and armour, arranged in groups the most tasteful and impressive—the vast size and splendour of the apartments, lighted by thousands of costly lamps—the ceiling and doors one blaze of gilding—the roofs supported by columns composed of the rarest materials, and in some instances glowing with precious stones—the walls covered with crystal mirrors that multiply the objects a thousand times, or even in some instances composed of lapis lazuli of enormous price—the richest furniture that artists' skill can produce—vases of the most beautiful forms, and of materials which kings and emperors alone can aspire to—the panels hung with the most famed performances of the pencil—and beneath them, the fairest creations of the classic chisel, mingling with all that modern art has contributed of beautiful or sublime—in short, whatever the most uncontrolled fancy can imagine, or the most boundless wealth command, are here assembled with a profusion that dazzles even the accustomed eye.

The condescension and even kindness displayed by the imperial hosts on such occasions win every heart. The emperor, all life and frankness, is every where, and has a happy word for every one; while the empress, ever graceful and dignified, presides with inexpressible charms in her own peculiar sphere. Every member of their family follows the gracious example set before them by those whom they naturally look up to as the first beings on earth.

The splendour displayed by the guests at these gay festivals is in every way worthy of their illustrious entertainers. Ladies never appear in any but the most expensive dresses; while their lords glitter in rich stars and uniforms of every variety.

On some occasions the officers of all the troops in garrison at St. Petersburg have the honour of being entertained by their imperial majesties. These, however, are looked upon as mere public banquets, not as fashionable receptions, which are exceedingly select. At these latter, none but the highest nobility and the families of the ministers of state are present; nor could any other class meet the enormous expenditure which they occasion. Of the official personages, some have not private fortunes sufficient to qualify them for such display; but their salaries being very large—perhaps the largest paid to any ministers in Europe—they are able, while in office, to shine with the greatest in the empire.

The names of the Cheremetieffs, Apraxines, Benkenдорffs, Naryschkines, Strogonoffs, Paschkoffs, Volkonskys, Lievens, Troubetskoy, &c., need not be repeated as among those who are the most frequent and most honoured guests at court. It should be stated, however, that many of the native families who are the most distinguished supporters of his throne really have very little acquaintance—if we may use so humble a phrase—with the emperor. The intercourse on these occasions is on the whole so formal, that strangers, who have only been a fortnight in St. Petersburg, sometimes see more and know more of the emperor and his family than those who have spent the best part of their lives at court.

It must not be concealed, however, that these frequent

opportunities of associating with the imperial family have been productive of great good in regard to the education of the families of the nobility. In this important matter the example of the empress has been of the very greatest consequence. Formerly, the education of females in the highest families of the nobility was of the most superficial nature. They acquired all that could "tell" in society; every showy accomplishment was prosecuted with the greatest anxiety: but to useful knowledge, to the acquirement of sound principles of religion and morals, so little time was given, that the education of a Russian lady of high rank was not unjustly said to be limited to the study of French and the art of handling the fan. The young beauty was most thoroughly instructed in the science of turning her personal charms to the greatest account; but while the mode of captivating a lover was so carefully instilled, the more important one of retaining his affections as a husband was left entirely out of view.

Such a state of things could not be expected to continue under an empress who belonged to the most highly-educated of all the royal families of Europe, and who had herself received the most complete education that ever a princess enjoyed. The sincerity of her zeal in this vital cause was soon made apparent, by the great pains which she took with the education of her own daughters. The Russians, ever prone to imitate those whom they look up to, soon followed the example; and, having once been taught the importance of storing the female mind with knowledge of a higher character, they have latterly bestowed such care on this good task, that

now, perhaps, there is no country in the world where the daughters of the nobility receive a better education than they do in Russia.

What the empress has done for her daughters, the emperor has not less faithfully performed for his sons. They have all been educated under his own eye. The time and labour bestowed by him in this department of his parental duties would appear altogether inconsistent with his devotion to so many other serious affairs. For, not satisfied with having provided for them in every department the best masters that could be found in Europe, he himself bestows many hours in superintending the studies of his promising sons. As might be expected from what we have said of his martial tastes, he is especially zealous in making them acquainted with all the branches of a military education. His oldest son, the hereditary grand-duke, Alexander Nicholaevitch, now in his twenty-first year, is said to have a most complete knowledge of the science which, to all appearance, will for many years be the most important that the sovereigns of Russia can acquire. Having been brought up with the most hardy habits, the heir-apparent can endure every kind of fatigue, and expose himself to every kind of weather. This hardening process, indeed, would even appear to have been carried too far; for it is now alleged that the health of the young prince has been broken by it, though not, happily, to such extent as to excite any serious alarm.

The care taken by the emperor in educating his sons, as in the case of the empress just mentioned, has also been very beneficial as an example to the nobility in

training theirs. The Russian nobles have long been distinguished for the pains bestowed in educating their sons; and with the improvements recently made, their system is now probably as complete as any course of private education—for such, generally speaking, it still is—can ever be made.

From the warm affection which subsists between all the members of the royal family to which the empress belongs, there is scarcely a season passes that some Prussian prince does not visit St. Petersburg. Indeed, from this and its other numerous connexions with the royal families of Germany, the court is almost constantly attended by some of the younger scions of Teutonic royalty. One of these princely knights-errant, Maximilian of Leuchtenberg, it appears, has been fortunate enough to gain the heart of the fair princess who doubtless aided in drawing so many of the gay and gallant to her father's court. Who would have ventured, twenty, or even ten years since, to predict that the imperial house of Russia would ally itself with the family of Napoleon? Truly politics work changes which surpass the calculations of the warmest lover of the marvellous. And yet politics can have had little to do with this match. Some, indeed, may think that, if the prince himself be without political prospects or name—in fact, little more than a private gentleman—yet he has sufficient recommendation even to an ambitious father, as the brother-in-law of him who must soon be king of Sweden, and the near relative of him who is actually king of Greece—two countries in which Russian interests are deeply involved. But it is probable that, in selecting the son of Eugène Beauhar-

nois for his son-in-law, Nicholas has consulted the feelings of the father more than those of the emperor—preferred the competitor for his daughter's hand who was most likely to make her happy, to the one that would merely have made her great. Nor are his expectations likely to be deceived. When we saw him, some years since, Prince Maximilian of Leuchtenberg was one of the gayest of the many gay courtiers who then graced one of the northern courts; and those who had opportunities of knowing his character, spoke of him in terms of warm praise. A good heart and amiable manners, both of which he possesses in an eminent degree, will be valuable qualities in the Viceroy of Poland—the dignity to which, public rumour asserts, he is, ere long, to be raised.

Whether these visits of the princes of Germany to a court so splendid as that of St. Petersburg tend to make them better pleased with the sober gaieties of their own circles, is a question for others to decide. Of the effect, however, which familiarity with these splendours produces on the native nobility, we may state that it is far from favourable. That the example of the court has been most beneficial in some important respects has been already shown: but that in some points its example is decidedly prejudicial, is strongly asserted by many; and in nothing is it more prejudicial than in fostering that turn for extravagance and love of show which are naturally so strong in every Russian breast, that it would be more desirable to check than to encourage them. Accustomed, in their visits to court, to see nothing but the most unbounded extravagance, they carry back the lesson with them into private life; each rivalling

with the other, who shall go farthest in the magnificence of their tables, and their general style of living. The natural consequence of this reckless mode of life has been, that many of the nobles, with incomes nominally of enormous amount, are in reality involved in the greatest difficulties. So far from leading the happy, enviable existence which the world would ascribe to them, they are, in fact, leading the most miserable life that can be imagined—that of being compelled by their vanity to maintain a hollow show, which though it may add to the splendour of the imperial court, entails only misery on the families of its victims.

In one sense, indeed, the evil consequences of the example which he gives recoil on the emperor himself; for those of the public functionaries who have neither private fortune nor official salary{sufficient to enable them to cope with their neighbours in this race of extravagance, manage to find means of doing so by robbing the state. There can be no doubt that the ruinous style which they are forced to keep up on these occasions is one great cause of the extreme and shameless dishonesty which, as will be hereafter shown, prevails among Russian functionaries, to a most deplorable extent.

Nor is it possible to avoid remarking, in connexion with all these splendours, that the means of supporting them are wrung from the poor and the oppressed. How many serfs must toil—how many millions must eat the bitter bread of sorrow—before the emperor can fill his halls with ornaments that would purchase kingdoms, and keep up a show to which history yields no parallel! Such, at least, were the reflections that rose to our minds,

as we trod his magnificent saloons, glittering with more than barbaric pomp. In the palace of a sovereign who reigns over a free people, these thoughts will not intrude ; for its splendours are but the reflected grandeur of the nation which has voluntarily contributed them. But in Russia it is impossible to forget that the magnificence of its mighty ruler is levied from those who have no voice to plead their cause—no arm to shield them from rapacity and wrong.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EMPEROR'S REFORMS—OFFICIAL BRIBES— CONDITION OF THE SERFS.

Shameful prevalence of bribery—Judges—Magistrates—Anecdotes of a police director—Nothing can be done without bribing—Difficulty of changing the system—Attempt to liberate the serfs—Their present degraded condition—Sold with the land—May be bought as servants—Extreme difficulty of arriving at the truth on these subjects in Russia—Injurious effects of slavery on masters as well as the sufferers themselves—Danger of keeping the people longer in slavery.

OF all the important measures by which the short reign of the Emperor Nicholas has already been distinguished, none are so likely to hand down his name with honour to posterity as those which he has adopted for reforming the many abuses which exist in the general administration of the empire. Some indeed may wonder to hear his name mentioned in connexion with reform of any kind; but that he is nevertheless, in many things, both a bold and persevering reformer, none who know his character can for a moment doubt.

As the greatest and most obvious abuse of all, he has strenuously set himself to reform the bribing system referred to at the close of a former chapter. In spite of all his efforts, however, bribery in public offices still prevails, to a degree unheard of in other countries. Even in Austria, where they understand such things very well, they are mere tyros in the science compared with the Russians. It grinds the poor and impoverishes the rich: it is prac-

tised in every branch of the administration, from the lowest clerk to the highest minister: it paralyzes industry, enterprise, merit, in every corner of the empire.

If you commence a lawsuit, however just your cause, it remains undecided for years, unless you bribe the judges again and again. If you want a government contract, the heads of the department must be propitiated with half of your calculated profits. If a situation is procured it must be paid for. If you wish to have your passport, especially in any of the remote provinces, a thousand difficulties can be thrown in the way till money removes them. Thus a foreigner, in a distant part of the empire, who wanted to leave the country, had waited upwards of a month without being able to obtain his papers from the governor's secretary, who always sent evasive answers. His patience being at length exhausted, he made a journey of a hundred miles, to wait on the governor himself. He was received with open arms, feasted, honoured as if he had been a bosom friend; but still his passport made no progress, until means were found to give the applicant a hint that he had forgot to accompany his letter with the customary bribe. The money was paid—the well-bred governor perhaps pocketing half of it; and the traveller got off without further delay. In all probability, money would have been equally powerful had he been a murderer, only that he would have had more to pay.

The sums drawn in the shape of bribes by some people in office are quite enormous, not only in the capital, but in the provinces also. There is a town in the south of Russia where the director of police has an income of

80,000 roubles a-year (3200*l.*), though his regular salary is only 6000 roubles, or 240*l.* All over the empire, the people holding such situations are notorious for their rapacity ; but this personage enjoys peculiar opportunities for swelling his booty, having a monopoly for furnishing the prisons, lighting the streets, &c. Every inhabitant must make him presents, to avoid arbitrary interference with their affairs. But the largest item of all is paid by thieves, who thus purchase their escape from justice, in the face of complaints strongly and frequently urged by the most respectable residents. It is quite impossible to obtain redress for any grievance : better leave it untold, if you wish to avoid new loss.

One of the anecdotes regarding this worthy illustrates so admirably the state of matters in Russia, that we give it as a specimen, from among many which could be repeated. Our informant, a merchant living at the place in question, had repeatedly missed money from his cash-box. Suspecting a man in his office, he resolved to watch him ; and at last, after losing 800 roubles in the experiment, obtained sure proof that he was the thief. A police officer being sent for, the person's trunk was searched, and 650 of the roubles found in it ; but neither restitution of the money, nor punishment of the offender could ever be obtained. The officer, indeed, carried off the cash, and made an able report to his chief ; but good care was taken that it should never find its way back again to the rightful owner, who was forced to let the matter lie unagitated, knowing that to pursue it more would only be expending money in vain.

Further to show the purity of Russian justice, the same gentleman mentioned that a fellow once came to him with a forged paper, demanding money in the name of the police: it was paid without suspicion. But the visit being soon repeated, he suspected that there was something wrong, and put some questions to the messenger, who instantly took guilt to himself, and fled. The printed paper and police stamps being both found to be forgeries, the offender was taken into custody, and the gentleman who had been the means of exposing him was thanked a hundred and a hundred times by the head of the department, who said that the man was an old officer, known for his tricks.

Surely this delinquent was made an example of? By no means! In place of being punished, he is now again in the pay of the police. He had gained enough by his forgeries to be able to bribe the authorities to silence and connivance.

These are only weak specimens of what bribery can achieve in Russia. It can do everything; and the misfortune is, that without it nothing can be done. If you apply for the most trifling service, or the smallest piece of information at any public office, it must be paid for. When we asked a bookseller why he had not thought of publishing a proper guide to St. Petersburg, such as those which are to be found of every other capital, he said that the undertaking would ruin him. Before he could procure the necessary intelligence in that accurate form which alone could render such a book of any value, he would have to expend at least 30,000 roubles in bribes to the clerks and principals of the various establishments.

The bribes expended in getting up a small and inefficient thing of the kind, containing only a few sheets, had amounted to ten times the cost of the printing and paper of the whole edition.

It is notorious that, in some of the public offices, many are so poorly paid, that, in order to subsist, they must have recourse to the taking of bribes; and it is equally notorious that some of these gentlemen, who have only 30*l.* a-year of salary, drink their claret and champagne. When an inferior officer is detected taking money, his master may make a pretence of punishing him; but at the same time he secretly encourages the practice by pocketing a share of the spoil.

It is this universality of the system which renders it so difficult to sweep it away. Were there only the heads of departments to deal with, it would soon be cured; but besides the few hundred leaders in this rapine, there is an army of many thousand subordinates to contend with. Before their ravages can be checked, *every salary in the empire must be raised tenfold*. With all his determination, therefore, Nicholas has not yet been able to clear out this worse than Augean stable. As in every similar case, the contemplated reform is very unpopular with those on whom it may fall. The attempt is also attended with considerable danger to the emperor himself; but his character is sufficient guarantee that he will not shrink from it on that account. It is the misfortune of a despotic government that no great reform can ever be accomplished under it without violence; so that, in all probability, the stream with which this nuisance will be swept away must be one of blood.

That Nicholas can be *impartial* in his vengeance—that rank will not save an offender when once his guilt is known—was well proved the other day, by the case of a collector of taxes, who, though a man of good family, and invested with a high military title, was degraded to the ranks, and sent to Siberia, for peculation.

That the functionaries who take bribes from the people should also be guilty of robbing the sovereign, is a transition so natural, that none will be surprised to hear this also enumerated in the list of Russian grievances. In fact, peculation prevails to an enormous extent. Those who have the public money passing through their hands plunder in the most unblushing manner; and contractors cheat the government as if it were a bounden duty to do so. This is one of the most melancholy characteristics of the Russian. He seems to be utterly incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong in regard to the public money. Neither banishment, nor fear of exposure and loss of rank can keep him from turning his position to account, as it is politely termed. The difficulty of finding Russians who will act in office with anything like honesty, is one of the principal reasons why so many foreigners are still employed in the highest offices of the state. Whenever a Russian is appointed to a public situation, or obtains a government contract, he begins to consider how he may best impose on the emperor, and enrich himself. But Nicholas has at last stepped in; and, from the vigilance now employed in watching the public robbers, it will no longer be so easy to supply the navy with tar little better than ditch-water, nor to mount the cavalry in leather that would not stand a week's hard wear.

Another reform, which puts the emperor's character even in a still more favourable light, is his desire to **LIBERATE THE PEASANTRY**, and to raise their character in every way. He has not directly interfered with the nobles on this subject, but has set them the example, accompanied by a pretty intelligible hint that he expects it to be followed. On all the estates of the crown the serfs have been liberated, and care is taken to qualify them for freedom by education and indulgent treatment.

The great objection raised to this scheme by the nobles is the same which has always been made in other countries to attempts of this nature: namely, that *the people do not wish for freedom*; and, as a proof of this, reference is made to some experiments of last century, when the peasants in certain districts were enfranchised, and attempts made to introduce a better system of agriculture amongst them. Instead of showing themselves proud of their free state, many first sold and drank the value of their new implements, and then, complaining that they did not know what to do with liberty, petitioned that they might be again placed under the lash and the goad. But this is only the natural consequence of slavery: it always makes men unfit to appreciate the blessings of freedom. If the nobles were sincere in seconding the emperor, the true way to remedy this would be to teach their humble brethren the value of liberty. They should begin by establishing schools more extensively, or otherwise labour honestly to prepare the minds of the people for independence; and among the things which they might teach them, ought to be the fact that the bondage of the lower classes is not an old

and traditional usage in Russia, but an innovation of comparatively modern date. There had always been *domestic* slaves in Russia; but it was only in the reign of Fœdor Ivanovitch, the last Tzar of Muscovy, who died in 1591, that the *peasants*, the great mass of the people, became serfs (*servi glebæ adscripti*). Through the influence of his talented minister, Godunoff, they lost the right of passing, as interest or fancy dictated, from one landowner to another, and have ever since been compelled to *remain on the soil where they are born*, or, which is the same thing, they cannot leave it without their master's permission, who continues to the last hour of their life to draw a portion of their earnings, in whatever part of Russia they may be located. The landlord can transplant them wherever he pleases on his own property, but it is a high crime to sell or buy slaves by auction, or in any other way, *apart from the land*. The owner of the soil on which they were born is compelled to support them in sickness and old age.

In certain parts of the country there would appear to be some exceptions to the law just mentioned, regarding the sale of peasants being authorized only when the land is sold: for we were distinctly told in the south of Russia, by English families long resident there, that Russians of a certain rank are allowed to buy slaves, even when not buying land. No merchant, no foreigner, no Jew, is permitted to do so; but any Russian, who has attained the military rank of major, can purchase slaves to be his servants. He can also, in some manner, transfer his rights to others: for many foreigners get a friend to buy slaves for them, and retain them as servants

in his name. Indeed, unless people have recourse to this system, they can scarcely get servants at all. "Why don't you buy slaves?" was the question put to an English lady, when she complained that she was at a loss for servants. Her objection about her principles not allowing her to employ slaves was regarded as mere English prejudice. Even if our fair countrywoman could have got over her repugnance to this traffic in human blood, she would have found, what all others find, that such servants are the worst that can be got.

It is necessary to state, however, that on the subject now under discussion, we found it impossible to obtain any really satisfactory information. English people, of course, having no object to gain either by exaggerating or concealing the truth, all agree in telling the same story on this question; but no two Russians ever agree on this, or, we may say, on any other point connected with the usages and institutions of the country. To get at the truth in Russia, even regarding the simplest subject of curiosity, is literally impossible. In free countries truth is to be got at by a stranger, if he takes the trouble of inquiring in the proper quarter; but here the more he inquires, the more is he bewildered. What he writes down one day, he is forced to contradict the very next. Many instances might be given of the ignorance which prevails here regarding the subjects most likely to interest a stranger, and especially regarding public matters, or, least, of the contradictions which we heard concerning them: but we shall now mention only one. It happened, during a discussion about the public revenue of Russia, a large party of most intelligent people. Some main-

tained that it amounted to 34,000,000*l.* sterling, and maintained it stoutly. They were only making it more than twice what it really is! In fact, every Englishman who has visited this or any other continental country, where there is no free press, must have been struck with the great difficulty there is in learning the truth, even on the most public affairs. The stranger is confounded with statements the most contradictory, from people who ought to be equally well informed. This will always be the case where men get little thanks for knowing anything beyond the mere routine of their duty—where no discussion is allowed on questions connected with government arrangements—and, above all, where the press is not allowed to circulate correct information.

Returning, however, to the subject from which we have digressed, we may mention that on one point, connected with the serfs, all our informants were agreed; namely, that though only certain classes can hold slaves without buying the property they belong to, yet any person who has the means may buy a property with slaves on it. It would also seem well established, that the total number of serfs in the empire amounts to 21,000,000. Of these a portion is liberated every year; some, but only very few of the nobles following now and then the example of the crown. Thus, it appears, that in the course of 1836 about 352 were liberated, making the whole number of enfranchised serfs up to that time 67,736.

Shopkeepers and traders worth thousands a-year may be seen in St. Petersburg, who are still but slaves. It is even said that such find some advantage in being thus bound, and would not change their thralldom even were

it in their power to do so. But this we cannot comprehend: it may be good Russian reasoning, but is scarcely common sense.

One thing, however, connected with these serfs, we can fully understand; which is, that, whatever may be the blessings of slavery to those who remove from their native huts, those who remain on the property are in a most wretched state. In most instances there is no bargain between the landlord and his people. He may take as much or as little of their money or their crop as he pleases: there is nothing but self-interest to hinder him from taking all. The poor wretches are ground to the very dust. Besides the stripes already spoken of, they are subject to banishment, and even severer punishment, at their tyrant's pleasure. Of course, he has an interest in retaining as many of them on the estate as possible. Like a farmer with his horses or his oxen, he cannot kill nor drive them out to the waste, without injuring his own revenue; for, besides the amount of his income, the value of his property, when he wishes to sell it, also hinges on the number of his dependants. The people are counted over to the purchaser, like so many sheep.

We even doubt, whatever the *theory* of the law may be, whether in *practice* a nobleman has not power of life and death over his serfs. If he commit murder it is almost impossible to punish him. In short, spite of the sentimental rhapsodies which have been published on this subject, the connexion between master and slave in this country is unredeemed by a single alleviation. Bad as slavery was in our West India possessions,

we know that there were *some* happy slaves, just because there were some kind masters who took an interest in alleviating the sad lot of their dependants: but in Russia we did not meet with a single well-attested instance of a landlord having adopted a philanthropic scheme for improving the condition of those whom he has robbed of their birthright. It is not asserted that there are no instances of kindness—that all are cruel; but that there is nothing like enlightened, or well-organized benevolence among the greater part of the proprietors toward the unhappy creatures whose fate is in their hands, was the assertion made to us by every Russian with whom we spoke. It might be thought that nothing could be more close than the tie between master and slave in this country—that were it only from mere sentiment, if from no higher motive, a proprietor would be continually doing something for those on his estate. But, alas! Slavery brutalizes all who come in contact with it. To its debasing influence alone can we attribute the fact, that we never once heard Russians of rank speak with anything like affection of slaves. Nay, they speak of the lower orders with contempt—with something of a fierce hatred even; as if they were worse than brutes, not worthy of a moment's regard from rational beings!

These remarks, however imperfect, will give some idea of the system which the emperor is labouring to reform. In doing so, he is only following out the policy of some of his predecessors, who also wished to increase the number of freemen; and, as a first step, established those Foundling Hospitals which are among the most remarkable institutions in Russia, but are in no respect more re-

markable than as being literally nurseries of freemen. The many thousands annually educated in these places become perfectly free. It would be well for the nobles if they would follow, ere it be too late, the example set them by the government; for knowledge makes its way in by narrow channels: strictly as their frontiers appeared to be sealed, a better light may penetrate even this Russian darkness, and hasten the day when the nobles may wish that, like their emperor, they had foreseen the danger of attempting to enslave twenty millions of men, whose revenge will be cruel in proportion to the cruelties they have endured.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ARMY.

His longing for military fame—Love of reviews, &c.—Makes a plaything of his troops—Amount of the Russian army—How composed—Cannot be relied upon—Jew soldiers—The imperial guard—Finland sharpshooters—Russian compared with Prussian soldiers—The review at Kalisch—Pay—Length of service, &c.

ANXIOUS as the emperor may be to accomplish the reforms alluded to in the preceding chapter, they occupy but little of his time compared with his military schemes.

It is, after all, for honours of another kind that his heart most ardently burns. To be distinguished as a soldier, “a conqueror,” would be dearer to him than all the fame he could ever obtain as the “redresser of wrongs.” He is now the only monarch in Europe of decidedly warlike tastes. He is never happy unless when occupied with some military pageant: when he cannot get up the real game of war, he tries to comfort himself with its image. In 1835, for instance, he dragged the grave King of Prussia into the play, and a costly bout of it they had at Kalisch. The following year, he had a camp of 40,000 men near St. Petersburg, where all the ceremonies of a campaign were gone through with so much solemnity, that an aide-de-camp of his Prussian majesty attended the whole time, and daily sent a report of the movements to Berlin, just as if a real war had

been going on. In 1837 he had reviews and manœuvres at Vosnecensk, in the south of Russia, on a scale seldom surpassed even in actual warfare. From thence he visited Sebastopol, where he took part in some manœuvres of the Black Sea fleet; and afterwards proceeded to T'cherkass, where he met a division of his Cossack troops, some 60,000 strong, and presented to them his son, who has always had the title of Hetman, or chief of the Cossacks, but had never appeared amongst them in that capacity. He next started for Taganrog, and there closed his military shows for 1837, by reviewing 65,000 Cossacks of another tribe. In 1838, we have seen, with the help of his deluded victims, before the walls of Herat, he has made some approach to more serious pastime. What the *programme* of his military amusements for the year 1839 may be a few months will show; but those who know his character best will be much surprised should he fail in getting up a real war to occupy his next autumnal leisure.

These military shows create an immense drain on the treasury. It may be remarked, however, in regard to them, that even were they unobjectionable on the score of expense, many doubt whether such holiday exhibitions are productive of any real benefit to the army. All the advantages that can flow from them, rating them at the very highest, are dearly purchased with a waste of treasure which would cover Russia with roads in the course of a few years. But it is vain for his ministers to object; the emperor must be amused. And so much the better for England! These shows at home keep him so poor, that he can do little harm to his neighbours. His most

faithful counsellors assert that the discipline of the army could be quite as efficiently maintained at one-third of the expense.

On these, and, in fact, on all occasions, Nicholas treats his army too much like a plaything. The men are drilled, and laced, and strapped, and perked, with such childish minuteness, that they begin to think a soldier can have no higher duty than to look well on parade. "He fiddles away with his guard," said an officer, "just as a child does with its doll; and he is bringing up his son to do the same."

The amount of the Russian army in time of peace is nominally 612,332, of which the imperial guard contains 41,200. But it would be more near the truth to regard the army as almost double this strength; for it does not appear that the government has ever reduced it to the strict peace establishment.

We cannot profess, however, to give *authentic* information on the subject of the actual amount of the army. We have already referred to the extreme difficulty we often had in arriving at the truth on even the most public questions, but about none did we encounter greater contradictions than on this. One person would tell us that the army is a million strong, another that it reckons only half that amount. In short, the public would appear to know nothing at all on this subject. It is impossible even to ascertain the number of officers, there being neither army-list, nor guide of any kind, published by government; which, for very obvious reasons, keeps all these matters to itself. Even the Marquis of Londonderry, with all the excellent opportunities which he enjoyed for obtaining every kind of informa-

tion, confesses that he could not ascertain the strength of the Russian army at the present moment. "It is very difficult," such is his confession, "to get at exact information, as on this head the greatest secrecy prevails."

The most correct enumeration of the Russian army that has yet been given would appear to be that of Marshal Marmont, in his valuable work on Southern Russia; in which he states that "the *imperial guard* are six divisions, three of infantry, and three of cavalry, making sixteen battalions in all. The grenadier corps has three divisions of infantry, made up of twelve regiments, and a division of light cavalry, made up of four regiments; also two batteries of horse artillery, and fifteen of foot. The regiments of guards consist of three battalions of infantry, and seven squadrons of cavalry. The six corps of the line are composed each of a division of light cavalry (made up of four regiments), three divisions of infantry, each of four regiments—in all twelve regiments; besides two battalions of foot, and two of horse artillery. The total six corps of the line are seventy-two regiments of infantry, and twenty-four of cavalry, twelve batteries of horse, and ninety of foot artillery. The *corps of cavalry reserve* has two divisions, each four regiments, making a total of twenty-four regiments, and twelve batteries of artillery. The reserve of the line are three divisions, composed of twenty-four battalions. There is, in addition, the corps of the Caucasus, Siberia, and Finland, the troops of the interior, fifty battalions of horse militia, and one hundred and forty-six regiments of Cossacks."*

* *Marmont*, as quoted in the 'Recollections of a Tour in the North of Europe,' vol. i. pp. 162, 163.

There is no exaggeration in asserting that *within* Russia this mighty army is unconquerable. For a *foreign* war, however—for a long, or even a short service in any other part of Europe—the best judges consider them by no means likely to be formidable. No man denies that they make a good show on parade, and at the annual manœuvres; but even on these occasions, there is nothing very astounding to be discovered in their training or capabilities. In short, their merits, as compared with those of the English army, may be summed up in the words which we have heard attributed to a distinguished British officer (Sir T—— A——), who, after spending several days with the emperor in witnessing the manœuvres of fifty thousand of his finest troops, said to some Englishmen present, “This is all very fine, but we have nothing to learn from them.”

We will grant, however, that the emperor’s officers acquit themselves on all show occasions *better* than any in the world. None cut such a figure either at an imperial levee or an imperial banquet. They are potent trenchermen, and most gallant courtiers; can waltz as Russians only can waltz, and coin

—————“Soft words for lady’s ear,
Or compliments for rougher mood,”

such as Russians only can coin. In short, if a soldier’s duties never called him beyond the well-roofed exercise-house, or the glittering ball-room, the emperor’s army might challenge the world. Some, however, believe that the qualities of troops are better tested in the field than on the carpet; and, following the Russian officer from the gala-room to the bivouac, they discover that men

who look well and “act” well in the mimic scene of war, do not always acquit themselves the most ably in the real tragedy. Such cavillers ask—what have the Russians done in Circassia? None looked better in the reviews of St. Petersburg; yet they have been repelled, times without number, by what they termed a mere mountain horde, the very best of whom, assuredly, never were called “brothers” by an emperor, nor allowed to kiss the hand of an empress. In Poland, too, as is well known, they were all but beaten, their choicest troops having been nearly driven from the country by raw insurgents; and in the last campaign against Turkey, as has been admitted by military men of all nations who have since visited the ground, things were done which would have disgraced a rabble of schoolboys, weeks having been spent on points where days ought to have sufficed. It is *morale* that they want—energy, high soldierly feeling—that which, whatever be its name, can alone make an army valuable.

Whether the spirit and tone of feeling in the Russian army are likely to be improved by the experiment now making, of filling it up with Polish Jews, may be inferred from what an officer told us in describing these reluctant warriors. “They are so fond of the smell of gunpowder,” said he, “that each man needs to be put between two Russians, who pull him into action, and have instructions to shoot him if he runs away.” These men, be it remembered, are quite distinct from the real Poles. There are whole villages of them; and it was notorious during the late melancholy war in Poland, that a couple of Russian soldiers had but to appear in a place

of some hundred inhabitants, and be allowed to do as they pleased, the people falling on their knees in terror, and granting all they demanded.

The Russians, however, are far from sharing in this Jewish want of courage ; yet their courage, even at best, is not of a kind that can be much relied upon. In mere looks, and such advantages as good drilling can give, few troops surpass them. The imperial guard is one of the finest corps in Europe. The Finland sharpshooters also, who were of such importance at Ostrolenka, are greatly admired. An English gentleman, who has been long in the Russian service, says, they are among the best ever known : with single ball the men can bring down a crow on the wing with the greatest certainty. The same officer states that, various as is the composition of the Russian army, there is not a single portion of it that will not endure any privation of food and rest, without the slightest murmur. Their power of enduring fatigue he considers quite wonderful. The Prussians, their neighbours, he regards as unfit for hard work, because too young. A long war would make the Prussians capital soldiers, none being more *willing* ; but at present they could be worn out merely by marching and countermarching, without a single battle : for the very good reason that, from their years, they cannot bear fatigue like men double their age, and who were under arms before the raw students of Bonn and Breslau had left their cradles. This difference was strongly seen at Kalisch. The exercises each day were necessarily short, for old Frederick William's sake : yet, before the few hours were out, his best Brandenburgers were completely "knocked up," running away

to the bushes, &c., while the Russians thought it a mere holiday, being accustomed even on ordinary occasions to be under arms twice the time. Altogether, the Kalisch business was a failure—at least to the Prussians. Their officers—men of limited fortunes and honourably strict economy—were galled by being placed in contact with the profuse living of their northern friends. While nothing but champagne and wassail rang from the Russian dinner-parties, the Prussians were fasting on sour Moselle and lean rind-fleisch.

The regular period of service is twenty years ; but if war be going on at the close of that period, two years more are required for privates. No pensions are granted, but there are regulations compelling the men to give so much of their pay to certain funds, from which, on being discharged, each man has four or five hundred roubles (16*l.* or 20*l.*) to receive, with which he enters on a little farm. Such at least was the statement made to us by an officer of great experience ; but we are compelled to add that it was flatly contradicted by another to whom we repeated it, and who insisted that the soldier is dismissed without a farthing. After this, go to Russia for truth !

Each proprietor is compelled to furnish annually five recruits out of every thousand of the population on his estates, and pays to government the sum of 33 roubles (1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*) for the outfit of every man drafted. The nominal pay—near a rouble a-day—is better than in other continental countries ; but after paying his rations, &c., the poor fellow has only a kopeck, or *less than half-a-farthing*, of pocket-money remaining. Small as

the pay may seem, he comforts himself on reflecting that it is munificent compared with that of the sailor.

In regard to food, the soldiers are looked upon as being very well off, every man getting 3lbs. of bread daily, as well as a liberal allowance of beef and vegetables. Every time the emperor is present at a review or parade, each man gets a rouble (or rather it is paid to the fund) and a glass of brandy.

The best thing connected with the army, however, is that every serf on entering it becomes free. Yet we saw nothing to make us suppose that it is a popular service with any class, and especially not with the peasants. How different from those of France! So little do the Russians like the idea of becoming soldiers, that all conscripts must be sent to head-quarters *heavily chained*, to keep them from running away. In the remote villages we frequently met small bands of them marching in this state, and for a long time supposed them to be convicts—so harshly did the emperor's ardent warriors appear to be treated.

The officers are but wretchedly paid. After many years' service, they have not more than 700 roubles (28*l.*) a-year. Without private fortune it is quite impossible to live in the army. Even generals are paid at a rate which seems incredible. Colonels in command have an allowance for table-money, which in part makes up for the smallness of their pay.

Not satisfied even with the numerous army already at his disposal, the emperor would seem to intend that the whole of his empire shall be converted into one vast campment; and with this view, by means of his milit

colonies, he is planting it with soldiers as people plant cabbages. There is great diversity of sentiment about the success of these establishments ; but of the schemes which he hopes to accomplish by them and his numerous army, there is but one opinion. The consideration of these schemes, however, will be entered upon with more propriety when we shall have made ourselves better acquainted with the other great arm of the emperor's power—his navy ; to which important subject the next chapter will be devoted.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EMPEROR'S NAVAL PROJECTS, AND THEIR DANGER TO ENGLAND.

What is England doing?—Naval statistics of Russia—The Baltic fleet—That of the Black Sea—Of the Caspian—Steamers—Danger from the numerical strength of her marine—Otherwise no great cause for alarm—The Russian revenues not fit for such continued outlay—Rotten ships—Naval projects condemned by the emperor's ministers—Service not liked—Spirit of the sailors—Their bravery—Docility—Admiral Krusenstern—Officers in spurs—Russian sailors only bad soldiers—Their awkwardness—Ships run ashore—Officers mast-headed—Emperor's severity to them, and consequent unpopularity—Amusements of his young cadets at Peterhof—Childishness and cruelty of the system—Parade of Peter the Great's boat—More care now taken in building ships—*The Russia*—Visit to the COLLEGE FOR NAVAL CADETS—Annual expenses of the whole Russian navy—Necessity for preparations in England—Efficacy of Lord Durham's remonstrances—Engagement with the Swedes—Reflections—England has nothing to fear in the event of a war with the emperor—His weakness—Folly and criminality of the present clamour for war.

WE have stated at a former page—more ingenuously perhaps than wisely—the extreme vexation which we felt while passing through the Baltic fleet at sea. What right have *they*—was the question which rose petulantly to our lips—what right have the Russians to so many fine ships? “Children of the Desert,” who, a hundred years ago, scarcely knew that there was a sea, and had not on their abominable swamps a ferry-boat that their czar could sit dry in, nor a carpenter to patch it, till he himself gave them a lesson! Let England answer the

question—England, which has witnessed the progress of this gigantic force without uttering a word to check it—without making a single preparation for coping with it becomingly in the hour of need !

For—in sober earnestness—what have we to meet this new navy? Ships we can count by hundreds ; but are they *disposable*, ready to put to sea on an hour's warning, as these are every summer? When our navy was at its best, we were a match for all the navies of Europe ; but now that, by universal admission, it has sunk from its palmy state, are we able to meet not only our old foes—every one of whom longs for the day of our humiliation—but this overwhelming foe in addition? It is not feared that Russian ships are better than ours, nor that the Russians are better sailors. Our ships are, as ever, the best in the world ; and of their officers as of their crews, it can still without exaggeration be said, that

— “ A braver choice of dauntless spirits
Did never float upon the swelling tide.”

But men, however bold, cannot fight without ships ; nor can ships, however stout, steal out to sea of their own accord. The error of England is, that, having many more ships than Russia, she yet allows them to lie idle, as if they were to be improved by rotting awhile. It is now admitted on all hands, that, after providing for the large forces which we must keep up in the Mediterranean, in the Tagus, on the coast of Spain, on the American stations, we have not more than half-a-dozen ships that could be available for any sudden emergency. But what are these—what are even the whole of our twenty navy ships afloat, against a foe which now, in the Baltic

and the Black Sea together, possesses not fewer than forty-five ships of the line, with a numerous complement of frigates and smaller vessels, in round numbers making up the formidable force of one hundred and sixty ships, most completely equipped, and constantly victualled for four months' service?

We will not say that Russia, even had she attempted to take us by surprise, has ever been in a condition to deprive England of her supremacy on the ocean. On the contrary, our patriotism, or as some may say, our prejudice, is still so blind, that we are firmly persuaded that England, even with numerical force against her, has ever been, and is at this moment, able to humble any foreign power that may be rash enough to excite her anger. So long as we trust in English valour, and in that higher aid which has ever fought on our side, and will still protect us as a people raised up for advancing the welfare and civilization of the whole human race, we shall never join the cry of those who think that England is now to sink from her high place among the nations. But while we refuse to adopt the exaggerations in which some have indulged on this subject, we cannot conceal the fact, that Russia now possesses a navy, which ought to make us look searchingly at the state of our own. The magnitude of the danger which menaces us will be most apparent, from an analysis of the united force above named. The Baltic fleet, for instance, which, two years ago, consisted of only twenty-six ships of the line, now (1838), including the two fine ships which were launched last September, is composed as follows :

1 Three-decker	.	.	.	.	.	of 120 guns
3 Three-deckers	.	.	.	.	.	of 110 „
7 Ships	.	.	.	.	.	of 84 „
19 Ships	.	.	.	.	.	of 74 „

in all, thirty heavy line-of-battle ships (not forty-five, as has been erroneously stated). To these, however, must be added,

1 Razee	.	.	.	.	.	of 56 guns
3 Frigates	.	.	.	.	.	of 52 „
18 Ditto	.	.	.	.	.	of 44 „

besides corvettes and small-craft: in all, composing a fleet of the strength above named, and manned by a force of 33,000 men.*

The Russian fleet in the Black Sea, which three years ago reckoned only fifteen ships of the line (not eighteen, as has been frequently stated in England), with smaller vessels in proportion, and manned by 19,800 well-trained seamen, was considerably weakened by losses in the severe gales of the winter of 1837-8; but in consequence of additions made to it of ships recently launched at Nicolaëff, &c., the strength of this fleet at the present moment amounts to sixteen ships of the line, which, it is said, will be further strengthened in the course of the ensuing summer, by the addition of other ships now building. It being customary in Russia to begin the training of the crew of a new ship the moment her keel is laid, the ships last

* These numbers will be found to differ considerably from those of the : published by Captain Crawford, many additions having been made the naval force of Russia since his pamphlet was published. From at we saw of him in the north of Europe, we were fully prepared to l that any thing coming from his pen would be well worthy of the ntion with which his pamphlet has been received in England.

referred to will be ready for sea as soon as they are launched.

Nor is the list yet finished. In calculating the naval strength of Russia, we must not overlook the ships which she now has on the Caspian, which are the more valuable to her, that there is no chance of an enemy being able to reach them. Already there are several vessels of very considerable size on this sea ; and more are in rapid progress at the building-yards recently established at very favourable points.

The last item to be added is her steam-boats, which in such seas as Russia will have to fight upon, will be of the utmost service to her in case of a war. Including those on the Caspian and the sea of Azoff, she has now at least sixty steamers, of one kind or other.

Great, however, as the naval strength of Russia undeniably is, we must not allow our fears to blind us to the fact, that she has often had a fleet much more numerous than her present one. At the commencement of the wars of the French Revolution, she had a fleet half as strong again as that now under consideration ; and at the termination of those wars, she had exactly the same number of large ships that she now has. After that period, indeed, the navy was greatly neglected, and it had dwindled away to nothing when the present emperor came to the throne.

Yet, admitting as we most readily do, that the Russian navy has at some former periods been strong and numerous ; admitting also that the fleet, whose strength is above detailed, is, in every sense of the word, inferior to ours ; that much of what has been circulated about the

science of the officers and the adroitness of the men is mere puerile exaggeration; that the Russian sailor is a hundred years behind the British;—admitting all this, the great fact must still strike all who reflect on this subject, that the *Russian navy never was before in such high condition as it now is*. Ships and men, even the worst in the service, are far superior to any that she ever before could boast of.

Besides,—the mere *numerical* strength of such a fleet, managed with however little skill, cannot fail to tell tremendously when war breaks out. Though England has nothing to fear from superiority of ships nor of seamanship, she ought to look well at the *physical weight*, the brute force, of the many-limbed leviathan with whom she will have to engage.

We saw nothing in Russia, however, that need make any Englishman seriously afraid of her power. England, if she be once fairly *aware* of the danger, may smile at the emperor and his thirty mile of ships: but what we saw in Russia certainly impressed us with the conviction that England *must*, and must speedily, do something more than she has yet done in the way of preparation, before she can treat this matter with the indifference which many have shown in discussing it. France has taken warning: from Toulon to Cherbourg, her arsenals, which had long been silent, have been in a state of the greatest activity since the spring of 1837; and would England but follow the example, the sooner Russia comes out of her lurking-places the better. We are, however, persuaded that, so far from being anxious to

go to war, with us, the very moment that the English government could say to the Russians,

“Let them be welcome, then ; we are PREPARED !”

little would be heard about the emperor's ships : they would not dare to show themselves on the waters, but would be allowed comfortably to rot where so many of them are rotting already,—in the docks of Cronstadt.

Much as we had heard of the emperor's energy, we were still surprised to learn that the fine fleet which we had sailed through is almost entirely of his own creation. When he came to the throne, there was not a ship of any value remaining in the Baltic ! In fact, he is now labouring as hard on his navy as he long did on his army. He is determined that Russia shall be not only a naval power, which Peter had made her many a day since, but that she shall be a *first-rate naval power*, cost what it may. To aid in accomplishing this project, he makes every personal exertion to inspire the fleet with enthusiasm ; showing himself frequently to the sailors ; popping upon them by surprise, to see whether all is going right ; is now in the dock-yards, and next day on the Baltic, threatening, encouraging, promoting ; everywhere giving an example of vigilance and self-denial,—everywhere enforcing the great doctrine of the Russian creed—*Devotion to the Emperor*.

These, all will admit, are excellent methods for accomplishing his darling scheme ; but whether he will be able to increase his fleet to the immense amount contemplated to us seemed very doubtful, when we were told

that his very best ships last only nine years, and many only six! The *wet* rot is disabling them, not quite so fast perhaps, but quite as efficiently, as English shot would do. Vessels launched in 1823 had to be re-timbered in 1830, and at the end of twenty years they are broken up altogether. Worse ships, it is said—we are speaking of quality, not of look—were never put together. They have all been hurriedly built from unseasoned oak, injudiciously cut in the forests of Livonia. The emperor wanted to *make a show*, to surprise Europe, when without the world being at all aware of what was going on in his dockyards, he should suddenly be able to announce, through his newspapers in Germany, that the Baltic fleet of Russia was at sea, and consisted, in round numbers, of at least one hundred sail. It was vain for practical men to object that ships are not mushrooms, and cannot be raised in a single night, or that, if so forced, they must, even like mushrooms, decay as fast as they have risen. The emperor *willed* it so; and that was reason sufficient. Who had a better right to have his whim gratified?

We are willing to admit that his navy costs the emperor little. Indeed, it is one of the points which should never be forgotten in considering this question, that Russia can not only *build* ships cheaper than any other European power, but can also man them for less. The pay both of officers and men is so small, that the annual outlay on twenty Russian line-of-battle ships would not defray the expense of ten of ours.

But, however small both the first cost of his ships, and the maintenance and pay of their crews may be,

his revenues are not fit to meet, for a succession of years, the rapid destruction constantly going on in the navy ; the only marvel is, that it should have been possible to keep up this ruinous display so long. “ You forget,” said a friend at St. Petersburg, to whom we were speaking of the expense of maintaining in an efficient state a fleet composed of such perishable materials, “ you forget that the sands of Siberia are made of gold, and that Russia has no national debt, or so little that she scarcely feels it.”

But the sea is a greedy mistress ; and the monarch who woos her ought to have few other favourites. Fortunately for England, Nicholas has many other rapacious claimants for his golden sands. A numerous army to support ; an expensive and harassing war in the Caucasus, from which he would willingly, yet dare not for shame, recede ; the most numerous and not the worst-paid diplomatic corps in Christendom ; agents, informers—spies if you will—handsomely pensioned at every court of Europe, and throughout the whole East ; these are some of the other favourites maintained by the emperor ; all of them rapacious enough to leave little for a service that needs so much to keep it even in any degree of respectability. “ I will not stop,” such is said to be his boast, “ until Russia has a hundred sail of the line in the Baltic ;” but all impartial foreigners who have been in Russia, and who have taken the trouble to inquire into these matters, instead of dreading that he will be able to increase his fleet to this unheard-of extent, greatly doubt whether he can long be able to keep up even the present number of ships.

Nor is it by foreigners alone that this opinion is entertained ; by none are the emperor's naval projects more loudly condemned than by enlightened Russians. In the bosom of the senate itself, among his warmest friends and ablest advisers, his fancies about making Russia more formidable at sea are most unequivocally opposed. Nothing is more common at St. Petersburg than to hear that all the ministers condemn the fleet, as a mere wasteful toy.

Even those who found their arguments, or their fears, about the ability of Russia to keep up and to increase such a fleet, on the alleged increase of her revenues, must admit, that if the public income has improved—a fact which cannot be denied—the public expenditure also has *more than doubled* within a few years. To continue his fleet, therefore, the imperial magician must find some other El Dorado besides his Siberian one ; he will wave his wand for many a day, before ships can be evoked without more vulgar aid.

Admitting that, from the small amount of the public debt, he must always have a much larger proportionate share of free revenue than England, yet, in justice to other departments, little more can be spent in the dock-yards than is at present done. It is even said that the fleet has already drained the treasury to such a low ebb, that—alas ! for all believers in the teeming fertility of his fabled sands !—the emperor would fain try a more common species of alchemy—that of charming money from the Jews of Hamburg and Amsterdam. In plainer terms, it is thought that, raise it where he may, he must soon have recourse to a new loan, and that the

attempt would have been made before now, had not the first proposals been unfavourably received among the great capitalists of Europe.

So much for the fears which England needs to entertain, about the projected increase of the Russian navy. As to the ships already built, however, it is but fair to confess that, so far as mere *look* goes, few ships of any nation can surpass them. We not only saw them under sail at sea, when they seemed to do their work most beautifully, but, two days after, we lay alongside the largest of them, off Cronstadt, when they returned to be laid up for the winter; and, in spite of their irregular look,—some being high, some low on the water, some having round and some square sterns,—presenting specimens, in fact, of all the different plans suggested within the last thirty years,—on both occasions we were forced to admire their general appearance. But, huge as they seemed, though their lofty sides loomed above our little bark like those of a mountain, and the men in the shrouds dwindled away to the size of crows, still, considering all the circumstances which came under our observation, we saw little to make us fear for the consequences of a quarrel with Russia. However well ships may look in port, their value in action depends on the men; and in the Russian sailors we discovered nothing that would entitle them to be compared for a moment with ours. Of mere bone and muscle they have abundance; being, in general, stout, well-made fellows: but they want life and activity. They move about, stiff and prim as recruits obeying the drill-sergeant; and they sit down to the oar with the agility of Dutchmen going to climb a stair. Their gray

jackets and whalebone stocks are not the only differences between them and our sailors: instead of the free, care-nought look of the British tar, the Russian has a quiet, subdued manner. He is more like the slave chained to the oar of the ancient galley, than the modern sailor with a home to fight for. He looks as if going through a task, not an occupation; as if working because the lash is over him; doing something from which he would run away the moment he has an opportunity. In fact, the service is far from popular in Russia, and there is little chance of it becoming so, while the common sailors continue to be paid with a pittance so wretchedly small, that a beggar in the street would scarcely take their daily pay for an alms. To sum up all, the people want that which no amount of pay, no severity of discipline, no enthusiasm on the part of their sovereign, well as they love him, can ever make up for: they *want all passion for the sea*. It is not their element.

Let it not be thought, however, that we charge them with want of bravery. The Russians are a bold and gallant people. It is the system, not the men, that we blame, for what struck us as defective in their sailors. They have, undeniably, one virtue over the English,—docility. The Russian is the most obedient creature in the world; he has no will, no wish, but that of his superior. Neither privation nor danger will ever draw a murmur from his lips; it is the command of his officer, and that for him is quite sufficient. Such a thing as insubordination was never heard of among a Russian crew. There is an instance of five of their ships having fled in the very commencement of a battle; but it was

the cowardice of the officers, not the insubordination of the men, that led to this disgraceful exhibition. If those who command them be firm, Russians will stand till their last shot is fired.

We had a remarkable testimony to their submissiveness from Admiral Krusenstern, at St. Petersburg. When this distinguished officer was preparing for his voyage round the world, he said, the Emperor Alexander authorized him to select the men best suited to his purpose, from all nations, and at any expense ; but, wishing that the merit or failure of the enterprise should be exclusively Russian, the admiral took none but his own countrymen ; and out of a numerous crew, he found it necessary *to punish only a single individual during the whole two years he was away*. Every thing he proposed—short allowance, change of diet, additional duty—was cheerfully submitted to ; a docility which drew his attention more forcibly, from his having often known English sailors—with whom he is well acquainted, in consequence of having served six years in our navy—murmur for much more frivolous reasons. A man who has seen the marines drawn out to quell a mutiny got up in consequence of a diminution of grog, recommended by the doctor during the prevalence of a dangerous disease on some part of the East-India coast, could not but be struck by the readiness with which his own countrymen endured every necessary restriction. The gallant admiral, however, is far from insinuating that he thinks the British sailor likely to fight worse in the day of battle, because he sometimes shows a will of his own.

The greatest defects in the Russian navy originate in

the emperor's favourite project of making sailors as like soldiers as possible. What would the crew of the *Caledonia* have said, had they seen Admiral Rowley strutting the deck in a gale, with *spurs* on his heels, as long as those of a Cheapside shopman? Yet, such is the Russian fashion; every officer on board is booted and spurred with such fury, that a foreigner is tempted to regard them as so many cavalry ensigns sent to sea for change of air.

From the officers, passing to the men, the first glance at a boat's crew shows that, as already hinted, there is much more of the soldier than of the sailor about them. In their gray jackets, rough duck trousers, and little blue cloth cap with red edgings, they look precisely like army recruits, of six months' standing. Most of them, in fact, are draughted from the infantry regiments, and are not sent to sea until too stiff for their new trade. To make the matter worse, it is only the most awkward of the soldiers that are turned into the navy. It was this which made an English naval officer tell the emperor not long ago, when he asked him what he thought of his fleet, "That his majesty had done wonders in making it what it is, and would still do more wonders; but there was one wonder, which it would baffle even *his* power and perseverance to accomplish—*out of bad soldiers he would never be able to make good sailors.*"

Even after entering the sea-service, they continue to be drilled in military fashion, during the long eight months which they spend in harbour every year. Little wonder, then, that they should be so unskilful when they do get out to sea for a month or two. The clumsy way in which we

saw some things done by the crews of their very finest ships would not have been tolerated on a Berwick smack. They are so little accustomed to saltwater, that officers and men lose their presence of mind when the slightest difficulty occurs. The breeze, during the few days we were near them, would not have frightened a Margate fishing-boat ; yet such is their inexperience, that a very fine ship was run ashore from mismanagement, just as if there had been a hurricane.

We were the less surprised at such an occurrence, when told that many of the men sent with the fleet on the occasion had never once been at sea before. In fact, the greatest disadvantage under which the Russian fleet labours, is the shortness of the northern summer. Many of the ships which we saw returning to harbour had left it only a few days before !

Another incident, which occurred during these manoeuvres, throws further light on her strange system. How would English officers like to be mast-headed ? This punishment is now seldom inflicted in our navy, even on midshipmen ; yet, at the very time we were passing through the fleet, two officers of considerable standing, for some very trivial misapprehension of orders, were instantly sent aloft. The emperor having given the command in question less distinctly than usual, the one officer obeyed the signal which the other had taken up wrong ; and this was sufficient reason for disgracing gentlemen before the whole ship's company !

Liability to such capricious degradation cannot foster that high feeling which, in British notions, is inseparable from the very idea of a good officer. In fact, both in the

sea and land forces (as will be more fully shown at a future page), the emperor carries his discipline too far. Gentlemen are degraded for the most trifling omission; and it is probably to this practice that he owes the bad feeling which exists against him among officers of every rank. We were not prepared for the unpopularity now alluded to. We had heard that he was beloved by the lower classes,—by the great mass of the army, as well as of the nation,—and found that he really is so. But we had not been long in Russia before we discovered that, to say the least, there is no liking towards him in the class just named. Nor can it be wondered at; for, generally speaking, none but noblemen are officers, and it cannot be expected that, if they have the slightest spark of the feeling becoming their station, they can forget insult like those above mentioned. They may not seek to revenge it at the time, but assuredly it rankles in their bosom for some future day; while even those who have never been thus treated, sympathize with their companions, from the mere possibility of being themselves similarly punished, for an equally trivial offence.

On this point, the emperor errs even with his young naval cadets. He is extremely fond of them, making them often come to the palace of Peterhof, and there playing all kinds of follies with them. Sometimes he amuses himself with making them run into the lake to charge old Neptune, or Sampson and his lion; promising a reward to those who shall first get on the giant's shoulders—in which position they are forced to remain till they shiver with cold and wet. Sometimes he runs and wrestles, and leaps with them; and then, with a flock

them round him, allows the urchins to pull him about, leap on his back, and use every familiarity with him, exclaiming to some newly-caught simpleton from France (or England?) beatified at such amiable condescension in one whom he had always heard spoken of as a gloomy tyrant, "See how my children love me!" All of which goes on delightfully, till a luckless little man, in the excess of his mirth, forgetting how dangerous it is to be familiar with autocrats, does something or other that rouses the true lion, and in a moment the complacent speech is changed to "Go to the black-hole, sir!"—or perhaps some more degrading punishment is inflicted.

When we found that the emperor treats officers, and those intended for that rank, so capriciously, it did not surprise us to hear that the common sailor is subjected to a system of discipline which all acquainted with it condemn, as most unnecessarily cruel. The smallest fault is punished with barbarous severity. If Nicholas should urge the example of other navies as an excuse for his method, the plea will not be admissible; for there are nations with whom severity is absolutely necessary, while, with the Russian, mildness will go much farther than harshness. Some may wonder at the statement, but it is not the less true, that until made so by the system in their army and navy, the Russians are by no means savage. There never was a people more sensible to kindness. Use them well, and any thing may be made of them.

In short, the emperor's system with his navy is a mixture of severity and childishness, as the facts just stated

fully show. Of the childishness, however, another specimen may be given.

The old boat in which the naval propensities of Peter the Great were first hatched, is, it seems, still preserved with great veneration, in the citadel of St. Petersburg. The Russians have not gone quite so far as to build a temple to it, as the ancients would have done, but they have christened it "Grandfather of the fleet," and treat it with honours little short of divine. A day or two before we reached the capital, this crazy concern had been removed with much solemnity from its place of rest; and, by way of worthily celebrating the centenary of Peter, *Father* of the Russian navy, this venerable grand-papa was carried round the whole fleet on a steamboat, which paused at each ship, until officers and men had saluted its precious freight with the same honours as they would have shown to the illustrious Peter himself. This glorious act of the emperor's patriotism, this proof of his reverence for all that concerns the national glory, was loudly sung in the newspapers; nothing but eulogies and exclamations were to be heard for a week together; while the good effect to be produced on the spirit of the navy, by the sight of such a glorious relic, it was beyond the power even of imperial flatterers to calculate. No man of sense, however, could see any good effect the mummary would have, beyond that of making the men laugh at such childish weakness on the part of their master,—who thinks to surprise the world by these *coups-de-théâtre*, but, like other theatrical people, sometimes excites ridicule where he reckoned on applause. Peter himself appears to have begun this folly,—having once honoured

the marvellous boat with something of a similar triumph, and given it the imposing title which it still bears.

The emperor has done more for his navy than will be done by this holiday work, by the resolution lately adopted—that, for the future, no green timber shall be employed in the imperial dockyards. The Russians have paid dear for the lesson, but are henceforth to take time to build, and are to use only seasoned materials. On this principle it is that they have recently constructed what is undoubtedly one of the finest ships in the world—the *Russia*, of 130 guns, the skeleton of which, at the time of our visit, was to be seen in the splendid dry-dock, lately built in St. Petersburg, at an expense of 1,600,000 rubles (64,000*l.*). This ship is on Sir W. Symond's plan, and measures 206 feet long, by 57 wide. Formerly she would have been hurried up in a season or two ; but, under better advice, four or five years have been employed in finishing her. On expressing our wonder how such a huge ship could be floated out to sea across the bar of the Neva, where they can never calculate on more than eleven feet of water at the very utmost, we were shown contrivances still more huge—*camels*, as they are called, which have long been used with great success, for floating new ships down to Cronstadt, where the carcasses are rigged and completed for sea. There can be little advantage, however, in building at St. Petersburg, the expense of these machines being enormous : one thousand men must labour at least ten days, before a ship of great size can be launched with them. Peter had a good reason for building his ships in the heart of the capital, for his city was peopled by hordes

who had never heard of a fleet, nor of the sea; and he wished to familiarize them to the sight of ships. This reason exists no longer; the inhabitants of St. Petersburg know very well that there is a navy, the emperor taking good care to remind them frequently of the fact, by a rejoicing for Tchesmé, or Navarino, the latter of which was commemorated while we were in Russia, by a sham-fight, and grand display of fireworks at Tzarkoie-Celo, when every soldier was compelled to subscribe ten days' pocket-money, for the gunpowder to be used on the glorious occasion!

As to Tchesmé, the Russians forget what it would have been without the young officer from Fifeshire, who planned and executed the scheme for burning the Turkish fleet; and that the English had any thing at all to do with Navarino has probably long since been forgotten by the Russians, in order to keep their allies, the Prussians, in countenance; who are trying to forget that the British troops had any share in the victory at Waterloo.

Great care is now taken also to remedy another defect, under which the Russian navy has hitherto laboured—the want of good native officers. Instead of employing foreigners, Russians are now trained for the higher branches of the service at the Cadet schools, where every attention is paid to their education. One of the schools is for naval engineers, in which 300 pupils are educated, and the other for officers of the line, containing 600 pupils.

The latter of these is one of the most interesting sights in the capital, and forms one of the handsomest orna-

ments of the Quay of the Vassilii-Ostroff. As we are not aware that any account has been given of this institution, we shall mention some facts concerning it, noted down after a very instructive visit which we paid to it, in company with one of the ablest and most experienced officers in the Russian navy. They will show what pains are now taken in Russia with the education of naval officers.

The College of Naval Cadets, then, is the *pet* institution of the emperor, who visits it at all seasons and at all hours. He comes upon the masters unannounced and unexpected. Nothing escapes his eye. He has sometimes dropped upon them at midnight, and gone through the sleeping-rooms, to see that the youths were comfortable. It is conducted by the venerable Krusenstern, than whom the emperor has not a more devoted servant in his dominions; and he seems fully sensible of his merit, honouring him with much of his confidence and regard.

The cadets being absent on their annual cruise at the time of our visit, we had an opportunity of visiting the whole of the building, and have never seen any place of the kind in such high order; which surprised us less, as in Russia *every* public institution is kept with a cleanliness and a care unexampled in other countries. All the rooms are painted anew every year; the smallest are comfortable, and the public ones even elegant. The emperor's own sons are not better lodged nor cared for than these youths. The young princes sometimes come to play with their future defenders; which they are enabled to do with more freedom, from the circumstance

that none are admitted to the college but youths of *noble family* : such are Russian prejudices even in the present day !

The pupils are generally from ten to fifteen years of age ; only a few are as old as seventeen. Besides being carefully trained in all the branches more immediately connected with their profession, they are instructed in foreign languages. There are not fewer than seventy teachers, under whom the inmates are arranged in five divisions, according to age. At the end of five years' attendance, students are permitted to enter the navy, as officers of the lowest class. As many as seven or nine, however, of the annual draught,—those who show capacity and feel inclined,—remain three years longer in the college ; at the end of which time they may enter the service as lieutenants, while those first sent away must serve five years to obtain that rank. When the three additional years have expired, these, the more talented cadets, have also an option to study three years more (six beyond the general term) at the University of Dorpat, under the most eminent professors in Russia.

The object of these exceptions is most wise, it being intended thereby to secure to the country the full benefit that may arise from the encouragement of youths of extraordinary promise. No one is *forced* to continue his studies beyond the first period ; indeed, every thing here is voluntary, great attention being paid to the genius and disposition of each individual. No one is expected to follow languages or geometry, unless he has a particular turn for them. On mere professional branches, however, there is great strictness ; the examinations,

especially in mathematics, being very severe and impartial.

Attention being paid to the practical as well as the theoretical departments of nautical knowledge, one of the rooms contains a smart frigate, fully rigged and equipped, of such a size that the youths of ten can climb and reef upon it with perfect ease. Even the mechanical branches of ship-building are not neglected; for in one vast apartment the plans of men-of-war are chalked on the black floor; and in the end of the beautiful dining-room, preparations were being made to build a miniature man-of-war: a hall of goodly dimensions the reader may suppose it to be, when it permits the scaffolding for a ship 50 feet long and 22 broad, to be raised in it, without appearing to be at all diminished by so large a piece of furniture. The model was first built and rigged in the imperial dockyard, and then sent in separate portions to the college. When finished by one set, it is taken to pieces, and built again by another. The work was to be commenced in November, when the heir-apparent himself, we believe, bore a hand in the work, as well became the prince destined for the post of High-admiral of Russia. At present, the emperor is Admiral of the young Cadets, and during the three or four months which they spend at sea every summer, their ship is frequently ordered to lie off Peterhof, that he may have an opportunity of exercising them in person. But they also make more distant cruises, which occasionally extend as far as Stockholm and Copenhagen.

This institution existed before the time of Nicholas; but he has given it new life. So minute are the pains he

takes with it, that he often examines the trial-papers himself, and with great care, in order to settle a disputed point of merit. Those who distinguish themselves he invites to visit his son, four or five at a time, on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. On his visits of inspection, every nook is looked into; larder, kitchen, linen-room,—from the porch to the garret, all must be seen. When accompanied by his brother, the Grand-duke Michael, or any strangers of distinction, he often commands a boy to strip on the spot, to convince them that the dress and habits of the pupils are not neglected. This, to be sure, is treating *nobles* with little ceremony; something as children do dolls and puppy-dogs: but in Russia, nobles, as well as *mooziks*, were made for the emperor's amusement.

Hospital, class-rooms, sleeping-rooms, are all kept with exemplary nicety. The Museum contains a most instructive collection of curiosities from the South Sea, plans, nautical and astronomical instruments, models of ships, steamboats, &c. In the library, we were struck by the immense preponderance of English books; and the explanation was, that all the pupils are most carefully instructed in that language.

The whole annual expenditure of Russia, on account of the Baltic fleet, including the maintenance of the institution now spoken of, and those for engineers, pilots, &c., as well as the cost of labour in the dockyards, is said to be 23,000,000 of roubles, or 920,000*l.* sterling. The annual outlay on account of the Black Sea fleet, is estimated at 16,000,000 of roubles, or 640,000*l.*; together making the whole navy-budget of the empire 1,560,000*l.*

We have been thus prolix in stating some particulars regarding the Russian navy, from the immense importance of the subject at the present moment. There is no point to which the attention of our public men ought to be more anxiously directed ; for, of all nations, England is most interested in watching the naval progress of Russia ; and she is notoriously the only one of which, as a naval power, the emperor stands the least in awe. This was well proved by what happened in 1836. When rumours came out in the spring of that year, that the Baltic fleet was preparing for a much more distant cruise than had been attempted in former summers, the ministers of some of the continental powers, residing at the court of St. Petersburg, ventured to state to the government that it would be necessary to give their sovereigns some explanation of the objects contemplated by such an expedition. But these notices were ineffectual. Preparations at Cronstadt still went on as actively as ever. All this time England had been silent. At last, backed by the sentiments so strongly manifested in Parliament during the warm discussions on Russian affairs, Lord Durham interfered. A hint was given—only a *hint*—that unless the Russian government would distinctly state that, in fitting out such a powerful fleet, they had no object beyond the usual summer cruise—in fact, that they were not to go *beyond the Baltic*—hammers would also soon be heard in the English dockyards. The hint was sufficient ; for Russia is never ashamed to retreat when it is not quite convenient to advance ; she cautiously “ bides her time.” But if she, for the moment, relaxed her preparations, and

changed her plans, because the English ambassador spoke out, she will find another opportunity for accomplishing her views, whatever they may be. Not next year, perhaps, nor the one after that, nor, probably, for several years to come; but *some* year not very far hence, when no Lord Durham shall be in the way, Russia will steal gently out; and, when we see so many huge ships sailing down the Channel, we shall rub our eyes in wonder, innocently asking, "What has England been doing all the time these were getting ready?"

Such at least was the question which we repeatedly put, on seeing the Russian fleet, not *in print*, where we had often seen it already, but in life and vigour, decked out in all the grim array of battle; and, what should not be forgotten, manned with crews who, though they have not any great love for a sea-life, would yet a thousand times prefer a life of action, whatever it were, to the lazy boy-work of Cronstadt harbour, and the tiresome bit of water round it. Without adopting the emperor's exaggeration, that they are "burning with zeal to show the world that the Russian sailor can fight with the heroism of the Russian soldier," there can be no doubt that they would willingly abandon their inglorious ease. It should also be borne in mind that, however inferior the Russian may be to the British sailor, he is still a tough fellow to deal with when roused. He may want science, but he has brute force enough to make his enemy respect him; and what we say of the individual, may be extended to the mass of their naval force. It is inferior to that of England in many most important respects; but, returning to the point already urged, it is still formidable from its mere bulk, its *physical weight*. For matters must indeed

be badly managed, if such a weight of metal as Russia now possesses should not tell in action. It is true that the ships are at sea only a few months every year, and that, during their long winter, the men forget much of what they had learnt; but Russia was formidable at sea when her ships were manned merely with boors, new torn from the forest and the plough. Can she be less dangerous now that her ships are filled with men who, however far below English and French sailors, are yet more regularly trained than Russians ever were before?

What Russians may do under the most unfavourable circumstances was strikingly shown in the engagement between them and the Swedes, in 1788. The empress had been trusting to the usual foreign supplies to man her fleet; but on this occasion, both England and Holland refused to allow their subjects to enlist in her service. The war at last broke out so suddenly, that Admiral Greig had no other resource than to hurry numerous levies of raw peasants on board his ships, and put to sea as fast as possible, with only *one* regular seaman to *seven* who had never heard a shot fired. His fleet, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, soon came in sight of the enemy's squadron, which was commanded by the Duke of Sudermania, and consisted of fifteen line-of-battle ships, all manned with veteran seamen, ranking among the best in Europe. Knowing how the crews of his enemy were composed, the Swedish admiral made sure of an easy victory, and gave battle under very disadvantageous circumstances, in a perfect calm, where superior seamanship could be of no use. In the very commencement of the action, five of the largest of the Russian

ships took to flight: yet such was the steadiness of the remaining crews, that the Swedes, after a well-fought battle, were forced to retire before a fleet now inferior in number, leaving their vice-admiral prisoner.

This fact is recalled merely to enforce the great points to which public attention in England ought to be turned—namely, the advantage which *numbers*, however indifferently trained, and *weight of metal*, even when unskillfully used, can give against the most experienced foe. If such things could be done by men who *had to be trained after they came on board*, surely the Russians have not become less formidable now that they have so many thousands regularly bred to the sea. Even were they the worst sailors in the world, which they are not, they are now numerous enough to deprive the proudest foe of all right to despise them. Let England then bestir herself: she has nothing to fear when fairly roused; but “this is no sleepy business;” with such an enemy it is better to be ready than to wait for warning.

The British government must not allow itself to be deceived by the smooth words of the Tzar. He is even now attempting to persuade the world that he has no evil intentions towards us. But these assurances are glaringly at variance with his open acts. Can it be denied, that so long ago as the month of September last, he ordered *ships to be built for him in the dockyards of England itself?* and has he not given instructions that these, and others to be purchased for him in our seaports, *must be ready by the spring?* Surely such demonstrations warrant, at least, precautionary steps on the part of England. A leading member of the Radical

party has been known to say that, were they in office, the first thing they should do would be to take possession of the Sound. But, without going this length, the most pusillanimous must see that England is called upon, if she has any regard for her own security, to keep a fleet of observation at sea, when the Baltic squadron again sails on its pretended annual cruise.

England ought also to look well to the state of her relations with Denmark, and endeavour, by every means, to cultivate a good understanding with a power whose friendship will be of the utmost importance in the event of a war. During a recent visit to Copenhagen, we were sorry to hear from all men of experience, of every shade of opinion, that England has been completely supplanted by Russia at the Danish court.

When the emperor and his advocates allege that it is not against *us* that his immense navy has been created, one may be allowed to ask, Against whom, then, has it been built? Are there pirates to be put down in the Gulf of Bothnia? or have the fishermen of Stralsund all of a sudden become warlike? Where, in sober earnestness, has he a single foe to dread, from the Neva to the Sound? Or will he say that it is to prepare his naval officers for conquest along the shores of the Baltic, that he is at such pains in teaching all of them to speak English? Nay, it is against England, and England alone, that, in the midst of profound peace, and with the words of peace on his lips, he has been preparing for war these ten years past. Fond though he be of show, he is not child enough to have made all this outlay without having some serious end in view; and that end he

hopes to accomplish the more securely, because he knows he can reckon on the aid of supporters as eager for our downfall as he can be. No one knows better than Nicholas that we have but one steady ally on the continent—Austria; which, fortunately, if it be our only constant friend, is also the very power whose support will be most valuable in the crisis which may not now be far distant. France, nominally our friend, would be the first to abandon us. The monarch of that powerful nation may be honestly anxious to preserve peace with England, for he is too enlightened not to know the value of her friendship; but he is the only man in his dominions who wishes us well. For, in spite of all that has been said about the extinction of national prejudices in France, both the ministry, and, above all, the people of that country, would rejoice to see the day when they can join such an ally as Russia in a crusade against the power which they most hate; and hate the more bitterly from knowing that it is the power which they have most reason to fear.

Once more, however, it is not meant to insinuate that England has any cause to dread the result of a quarrel with Russia. We have reason to take warning by the Tzar's manifestations: we ought not to trust one moment to his assurances of continued good-will; but as to any dread that England must succumb in the too-probable quarrel, no intelligent man can ever have seriously entertained it. Russia has become powerful, but it is solely by the permission of Great Britain. She has made inch-by-inch conquests; waged war on a petty scale with barbarous neighbours; but let her once rouse the wrath

of England, and she will then, for the first time, feel what war is. This overgrown foe would be crushed to atoms in our indignation.

Russia, with all her seeming strength, is but a shadow compared with England. True, her armies are more numerous than ours; but something more than brute force is wanted before battles can be won. Her fleets, too, are strong; but in three short months England can send to sea a force that would sweep them from the ocean. Let Russia lose but one great battle, and how could she replace her seamen? She has neither merchant crews nor a hardy race of fishermen to fall back upon, to repair her losses; and the raw levies of peasants, from the interior, above described, would soon be required for service of a different kind. In fact, the numerous population of the Russian empire is a mere bugbear. The population of England, though numerically not much more than a third of that of Russia, virtually possesses three times its strength. The one is compact, and, consequently, available on any sudden emergency; the other is scattered over wastes so wide, that, in case of any unexpected loss, months would elapse before new levies could be raised either for the fleet or for the army. The population of England is also superabundant; that of Russia is so deficient, that the demands of the army, even in times of peace, scarcely leave hands enough to till the ground. Let the emperor withdraw more of the peasantry, and the fields must be thrown out of culture—the country becomes again a desert—the nobles lose their only sources of income—general bankruptcy ensues—and the warlike monarch is left to contend with domestic, in addition to his external foes.

In short, those who dread the power of Russia do not know what Russia is—a nation of immense, but useless, because unwieldy, power. There is no life, no healthy circulation, throughout her giant frame. The towns, though many, are not close together, nor united by hourly intercourse, like those of England. They are hundreds of miles apart, and have no common interest to bring them in contact. The inhabitants of the different towns seldom hear of, and never see each other. Having no errand beyond their own gates, the citizens live and die without having been five miles from home. In short, the towns are as distinct from each other as if they belonged to different states. Between the towns and the country there is, if possible, still less sympathy : so that the very circumstance which makes the emperor look so formidable at a distance—namely, the extent of his dominions—will be found, when more closely considered, to be in reality a source of weakness.

As to her steamers, on which Russia places so much reliance, there are twenty ports in England, any one of which could match them without help from government. At the port of Hull alone more steamers may be seen in a single afternoon than could be numbered on all the Russian seas ; while Liverpool or Glasgow could meet them ten for one.

But it is not merely her deficiency in ships and men that renders Russia unfit to cope with England : she wants also that which is of more value to England than all her ships and armies—our MORAL ENERGY ; an element of strength which our continental foes too often

overlook, in surveying our dismantled ships, and, as they think, defenceless shores.

Away, then, with the thought that England need fear a war with Russia. The clamour about the “favourable east wind” which is to bring her ships in hundreds to our shores—about their being likely to come upon us before we “could be informed of their having passed the Sound”—and about the gratitude which we ought to feel to the emperor for giving us “a six months’ respite by locking them up in the ice of Cronstadt”—is unworthy of Englishmen. Russians themselves must wonder when they hear that England is afraid of them : for all Russians know well that, would we but stand on our guard, the emperor will not send a single ship out of the Baltic, even when the unfriendly summer shall open its gates. In short, the course required of us is very simple and obvious. Russia has made preparations for war, which, as it was her pleasure, she was fully entitled to do : let England also make preparations,—but on *such a scale as to show that we are in earnest*,—and the dismal clouds and the foreboding thunder which now fill the political horizon will pass harmlessly away. This, at all events, would be a more dignified and a more Christian line of policy than at once to declare war against Russia, as some amongst us have too rashly counselled. Surely he who urges his country to war forgets the evils which war must bring ; thinks not of the increased burdens of an already burdened people ; numbers not the homes made desolate, and the hearts made void—all the terrible bereavements that constitute the

costliest part of the ransom by which a nation's trophies are won.

It should also be considered that, as yet, the emperor has not shown any decided intention of going to war. He has taken no step, from which, if our government assume the tone which becomes them, he will not recede without a moment's delay. Little insults, isolated instances of wrong, have been received at his hands: but England can afford to be magnanimous; or, if she must have an atonement, in the name of humanity, let it be something less costly than the peace of the world—the breaking-up of sociality between nations—the interruption of the progress of civilization, for perhaps long years to come.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EMPEROR'S AMBITIOUS POLICY—HIS VIEWS ON GREECE—TURKEY—PERSIA—NORWAY.

Reasons why Nicholas aims at the subjugation of the East—And of Greece in particular—The Greeks in the Turkish empire—Intends to restore Greece to the splendour of classic days—Sketch of the Emperor's present territories—And of his energy in governing them—His revenues—Ministry, &c.—Treacherous conduct towards Persia—Has supplanted the English there—Miserable state of that country—Russian cunning—Their deserters in Persia—Schemes against Norway.

It was stated in a former page, that all who have studied the character of the Emperor Nicholas agree in opinion as to the ends which he proposes to attain with the aid of the immense army and the powerful fleet which have now been described. Those who know him best unite in asserting, that his ambition aims at nothing short of what may well be determined **UNIVERSAL CONQUEST.**

It is not to Western Europe, however, that the longing gaze of the autocrat is directed. Her cold climes and grudging fields are prizes too poor for his ambition. It is to the East, the warm and teeming East, that the shivering Muscovite looks. On Greece, with her thousand sunny isles, and on Turkey, with her once rich Asiatic dominions, have the eyes of Nicholas, as well as of his predecessors, constantly been set. For, richly as the Byzantine eagles have battered on the plains of the North,

they still turn with remembrance to the glowing shores of the Bosphorus, from whence they first winged their adventurous flight. On Greece, and all that ever the wide name of Greece included, the Russian emperors think they have claims, not only from similarity of faith, but also and especially from early family connexion. Nicholas has allowed the spoil to pass him for a time; but it is only to grasp it with double advantage hereafter—when the Greeks shall have been improved by a regular government, and habits of submission to the law.

But why, it will be asked, should he long thus vehemently for a country so distant and so poor? It is not for Greece by herself that he longs, it is for Greece as the mistress of dominions yet wider and fairer than all she ever owned in her palmiest days. In the stunted kingdom which now bears the proudest of all names of antiquity, there is a population of only 800,000 souls; but, scattered over Turkey—in Europe and Asia—there are not fewer than four millions of Greeks, every one of whom looks back to Greece as his country and his home. Ask any Greek, in the remotest corner of the Turkish empire, who is his king?—and he will say, “Otho, the Bavarian,” not “Mahmoud, the Turk.” True, he never saw Greece. But he speaks her language. He has heard of her glorious mountains, and, still more, of her glorious annals. He has been hushed in his cradle with songs that tell of Themistocles, and Epaminondas, and Miltiades; and in riper years he has heard whispered names of more recent fame. Though himself little better than a slave, and degraded by all the vices that long habits of slavery engender, yet his brow will burn, and his eye will flash, if he but hear the name of his country. Give him a

leader, and there is nothing that he will not dare, to avenge her wrongs, and drive the Moslem from the throne where the Christian should reign.

It is to this Greek population, then, as well as to that in Greece itself, that Nicholas looks in his schemes upon the South * and it is by them that he hopes to be aided in his projected conquests. It is with a view to retain their affections that he is so constantly intriguing, not only in Attica and the Morea, but all over the East. When the time shall come that he can march into Turkey, he counts on their support in every part of the empire. Of what importance would they be, were it only as guides to an invading army! For instance, taking European Turkey alone, there are at least 40,000 Greeks in its northern provinces, intimately acquainted with every pass and every stronghold by which an invading army would have to march.

To reconcile the Greeks to his ambitious projects, the emperor, through his thousands of spies and agents, tempts them, not only with gold, but with projects of new greatness for the lofty name which they bear. The fallen empire is to be restored, with glory more resplendent than ever. When the Tzar shall have transferred his seat from the gulf of Finland to the Bosphorus, the name of "Russia" shall be for ever merged in the more glorious one of "GREECE." Bright days will then begin to roll. Nicholas wishes to be not merely the Political, but the MORAL REGENERATOR of the East. As Emperor of Greece and Lord of the Orient, the rude Scythian is to drag back literature and science from the regions to which they have strayed, and replant them in the lands where know-

ledge and civilization first appeared. Attica is to recover her temples, her statues, her academies ; Byzantium is to have her palaces ; Ionia, her schools ; Chaldea, her astronomers ; Egypt, her mysteries. The treasures and the products of distant India are to resume their ancient channels. The mountains are to be clad anew with flocks, and the sea with barks ; blessing is to be on every tongue, contentment in every home. The shepherd's pipe shall again be heard in the vales of Arcady, the lover's song once more float from the Lesbian cliffs. Happiness and industry will be everywhere revived ; the whole wide East of Alexander blest with light, with arts, and with LIBERTY.

A noble project ! a most gorgeous dream ! Who would not be tempted to enlist under the emperor's banner, to share in the glory of bringing about so proud a consummation ? It is to be feared, however, that the kind of *liberty* with which he would endow his new conquests would be very different from that of classic Greece. To show, however, that this scheme is not so completely a dream as some may consider it, and to give some further idea of the character of the monarch who has devised it, we shall now mention a few additional facts more directly illustrative of his policy. From what he has already done, some estimate may be formed of what he may hereafter do.

There is nothing which shows the nature of the policy of Nicholas more strikingly than the undeviating steadiness with which he has followed up the system of his predecessors. That system, the reader knows well, has ever been one of aggrandizement. It is said that, on

ascending the throne, the sovereign of Russia takes a solemn oath, not merely to maintain the empire *unimpaired*, but to *extend* its boundaries by every means in his power. That this has been no idle vow a moment's glance at the map of Europe, or of her sister Asia, will fully prove : it is the book which affords the best commentary on the policy of Russia. How terrific have been her strides ! There is something astounding in the constancy of the progress which she has been, and is at this hour making, over the face of the globe. Not very long ago, we find the Tzars of Muscovy confined to the centre of Russia. A little time after, one conquers the kingdoms of Astracan and Siberia, of themselves covering half a continent. Another adds the provinces on the Baltic. A third flies back to the north, and subdues the Crimea. The last Catherine joins Poland and other conquests, in all covering 10,000 square miles of fertile land. Even the mad Paul, short as his reign was, extends the power of Russia in a quarter dearer, though more distant, than all ; for it was during his reign that her dominion was first firmly established over Greece, by the formation of the republic of the Seven Islands, under Russian and Turkish protection—a dominion which, however fondly we may flatter ourselves with the contrary, has not yet been overthrown. Alexander follows, with Georgia, Finland, &c. ; and last of all comes Nicholas, who has already more than fulfilled his vow, as the conquered provinces of Turkey, at the mouth of the Danube, and the wide acquisitions more recently made on the side of Persia, too strongly testify.

In short, province after province, kingdom after king-

dom have been successively added, till the once narrow dominions of the Tzars have swollen to be the largest empire in the world. It includes more than the half of Europe, the whole of northern Asia, and a large tract of the north-western coast of America. Its entire surface occupies more than twice the size of Europe, and constitutes a full eighth part of the habitable globe; while France covers only a two-hundred-and-fortieth part. Not fewer than twenty different languages are spoken within the Tzar's dominions. The total number of inhabitants has been variously estimated, some accounts making it little short of sixty millions, while others make it but fifty-eight. Both of these estimates fall below the truth: for recent returns raise the population of the empire within a little of sixty-two millions. China, which covers a much smaller surface than Russia, contains nearly four times as many inhabitants. This difference is owing to the singularly unfertile and inhospitable nature of the greater part of Asiatic Russia; for the European dominions are not unfavourably peopled, since they contain at least forty-eight millions of inhabitants, or a fourth part of the whole population of our division of the globe. It gives a singular idea, however, of the barrenness of a large portion of her remaining territory, to find that in Siberia, for instance, there is not more than *one* inhabitant to a couple of square miles. Central Russia is very densely populated, there being in the governments of Moscow and Kalouga nearly 500 inhabitants to the square mile. The average population throughout European Russia is somewhat above 90 to the square mile. The Greek church claims 42,700,000

followers, including Armenians. Of Roman Catholics there are six millions, of which Poland alone claims one-half: while of Jews the number is variously estimated, but, according to the most correct accounts, there would appear to be 658,809 in the whole empire, of whom 410,062 belong to Poland.

The annual revenue of the whole empire is stated at 355,000,000 of roubles, or 14,200,000*l.* sterling; of which 75,000,000 are contributed by a poll-tax; 83,000,000 by the guild taxes, and the import and export dues; 116,000,000 by the crown peasants, brandy distilleries, &c. The national debt, which in other countries swallows up more than half of the revenue, here takes but a very small share of it. Its whole amount does not now reach 50,000,000*l.* sterling. Happy country, which three years' revenue would clear of all its burdens! So prosperous has the state of the revenue been since the present minister, Cancrin, assumed the management of the finances, that there is a prospect of the debt being soon paid up altogether. The sum at present appropriated every year to the fund for its extinction is 30,000,000 of roubles, or 1,200,000*l.* The gold-mines, which many look upon as contributing so largely to the revenues of the empire, in 1136 did not yield more than 130 poods (4580*lbs.*); while the quantity of platina obtained was only 17½*lbs.* The quantity of gold obtained in the same year, from mines belonging to private individuals, was 135 poods, or 4860*lbs.*, and of platina 118 poods, or 4248*lbs.*

We are quite aware that not only in Russia, but in other parts of Europe, there are many who believe that

the amount of gold drawn from the mines is greatly underrated in these official publications, and who maintain that the increasing expenditure of the emperor has been met by the increasing productiveness of this branch of the revenue. In this opinion, however, we can by no means agree. That the mines have latterly become more valuable is quite true ; for improved methods of working have been introduced, and greater attention is now paid to their management everywhere, but especially to those of the Ural mountains, whose sands are richly impregnated with the pernicious ore. But that anything like the amount implied in the statements of the credulous can have been realized is altogether impossible. As gold, like every other article of commerce, must find its way to the market through the hands of the merchants, no extraordinary amount of it can have been realized without the agency of those who would have made no mystery of its value.

The true secret of the emperor's recent prodigality will be found in the miseries of Poland. The sums obtained for the confiscated lands of a whole kingdom cannot be small, allowing even that the conqueror may be liberal in giving them "cheap" to his favourites. The indemnities wrung from humble Turkey and enslaved Persia have also placed immense sums at his disposal. But the days when he could reckon on these sources of revenue are now, let us hope, for ever at an end.

The general administration of the empire is conducted by eight ministers, whose departments are as follow : *Household*, Prince Volkonsky ; *Foreign Affairs*, Count Nesselrode ; *War*, Tchernitcheff ; *Marine*, Menzikoff ;

Home Department, Bladow ; *Justice*, Daschkoff ; *Finances*, Cancrin ; *Public Instruction*, Ulvaroff. In addition to these ministers, there are four Boards, headed by directors-general : *Control*, Chitroff ; *Post-office*, Prince Lieven ; *Church Affairs and Foreign Confessions* (has for some time been united to the Foreign-office) ; and *Land and Water Communication*, Count Toll. There is a special minister or secretary of state (Count Grabofski) for Poland, and a secretary of state for Finland. All of these, as well as the heir-apparent, and the Granduke Michael, have a seat in the senate, which is the highest council of the empire. Its powers have been greatly extended of late years ; but, for all essential purposes, the will of the emperor is still the supreme law of Russia.

Nicholas is the more entitled to dictate to his ministers, from the fact that he is *intimately acquainted with the details of every branch of administration* now named. Some kings have a favourite branch, on which they exclusively bestow their attention ; but the present Emperor of Russia devotes himself to the business of each in its turn, and is master of every particular connected with it. The ministers all say that the well-known efficacy of the master's eye was never more completely confirmed than by the zeal with which every department is animated.

It is not merely, however, by the perseverance shown in increasing his dominions and revenues to their present unheard-of extent, nor by the untiring vigilance displayed in superintending *every* branch of the administration, that the wisdom of Nicholas is manifested. There is another part of his policy which indicates yet more pro-

found sagacity, and is, therefore, still more worthy of attention even than these—the readiness, namely, which he ever shows to withdraw from any ambitious project, nay, to disavow it altogether, either when it has been prematurely detected by those who may be interested in opposing it, or when it would be otherwise impolitic to persevere in the attempt. This, in fact, is the hereditary policy of Russia. She watches her opportunity—waits till her intended prey has incautiously assumed a defenceless attitude, or till those who should keep guard over it have been disarmed of their suspicion, then pounces upon it with all the cunning and cruelty of the tiger.

This characteristic of the system followed by the Russian government is strongly confirmed by a recent transaction in Persia, regarding which country, and especially regarding the emperor's conduct towards it, we shall now mention some particulars which, while they strongly illustrate the general policy of Russia, are, at the same time, of especial importance to the English reader; for it will be hereafter seen that the Russians regard the humiliation of Persia merely as a stepping-stone to that of Great Britain.

The transaction more immediately alluded to arose out of the repayment of the expenses of the last Persian war, with which the poor Shah, as the loser, had of course been burdened. All had been regularly paid up to the final instalment, which, at the moment in question, was some time in arrear. The coffers of the state had long been completely exhausted, and the supplies from England were also dried up. Extortion, confiscation, squeezing

of rich private individuals and gorged favourites, cutting off noses, thrusting out eyes, and all the other gentle methods of Persian financiers, had already been put in such frequent operation, that they no longer had victims to act upon. In short, the Shah and his ministers were in despair; when, to their great joy and astonishment, help appeared from a quarter whence it had been little expected—from Russia herself. Why all this anxiety about money—a mere trifle of 250,000*l.*? With such a friend as the Shah, the emperor would be the last in the world to exact such rigorous payment. Besides, the matter could be easily settled without one farthing of money. Persia had only to *cede a little strip of territory*, which looks nothing at all on the map, and every claim for further indemnity should be instantly cancelled.

Will the reader guess what this little insignificant strip of the Persian territory was? It was *only* about the size of one of the kingdoms of Germany—extended *only* from Astara to somewhere beyond Eschref—and would only have put Russia in possession of an important line of coast on the south-western shore of the Caspian, on which she has long had her heart set, from some peculiar advantages which it presents—the present station for steamboats and ships of war being too far distant from that part of the coast where they are most likely to be useful; and, lastly, it would only have brought Russia within a hundred and forty miles of Teheran, the capital of Persia, from which she has already calculated every mile of the march she will have to make in order to reach the English territories in India.

Fortunately, this cunning manœuvre was detected in time, by those charged with the care of English interests in Persia ; and Russia, never ashamed to go back when she cannot advance with perfect safety, loudly disowned the imputation. *She* had never thought of such a treacherous conquest—would never take such base advantage of Persia's weakness, and of the unsuspecting confidence of a generous ally like England. But, in spite of all these denials, she *had* thought of it, and—what is more—she will again do so when a fitting occasion arrives. Meantime, as one step towards the accomplishment of her object, and by way of forming as many friends as possible in the envied district, she has been intriguing to get a consul appointed at Resht, which presents a favourable point for her operations.

In fact, the whole of the emperor's conduct towards Persia, ever since his accession, would furnish an admirable illustration of his grasping, yet cunning policy. It was not in one battle, nor in two, that the ill-fated Shah was humbled. The work was carried on gradually—now by an engagement won, and now by a bribe well bestowed, or a diplomatic *ruse* well played off—gradually, but so effectually, that now Persia, besides being stripped of a large portion of territory, lies a helpless, pitiable dependency ; without revenue, almost without a government, and literally without an army. Their Scottish commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Bethune Lindsay, whom they look upon as a kind of god—a second Tamerlane—will now have to fight all the battles alone ; for in the whole of Persia it would be difficult to assemble more than sixteen thousand soldiers, and of these there are

entire regiments which could not muster more than fifty muskets, and not half as many flints, amongst them. This is even overrating their equipments: the quantity allowed by an intelligent traveller, who has lately returned from that country, is, “half a musket among a dozen men, and two or three flints to a whole regiment.” The fellows fight well, but what reliance can be placed on troops so miserably furnished? The Persian government, in fact, is now a mere skeleton, ready to shrink at the slightest nod of Russia; while the country, never a beautiful one, is fast becoming a desert from the want of population. You wander over its wastes of sand and wildernesses of salt—alas! how different from the scenes with which young poets deck the land of the fragrant rose and the sparkling fountain—and find nothing but barrenness—misery! Such are the fruits of Russia’s policy. She blasts where she cannot seize. The time is not come when she can with safety close her grasp on Persia; England still has some weight where she takes the trouble to exert herself; and, but for England, the kingdom of Cyrus, ere now, had ceased to be named among the nations.

That Russia, however, has not *abandoned* her schemes—that she still looks forward to a day when Persia may be hers—is put beyond doubt by a fact more strongly illustrative of the calculating, jesuitical foresight of the policy we are describing than any we ever heard of. Some Englishmen, when lately in Persia, were surprised to see a corps of Russians in the capital, drilled and paraded with great pomp in the most public places. On inquiry, it turned out that these were

deserters from the Russian army, tempted by higher pay, and that Nicholas himself does all he can to *encourage desertion*, having made an express stipulation in the last treaty with Persia, that Russians absconding to the service of the Shah shall be treated by him as his own subjects, and allowed to re-enter their native country whenever they may feel inclined, without being liable to punishment or degradation of any kind. The emperor's object in this singular arrangement is, *gradually to remove the prejudices of Persian bigotry against the Franks—to accustom, not merely the army, but the people to the sight of the Russians—to prepare them, in short, for the time when Muscovite soldiers will visit Teheran on more permanent duty.* By encouraging the deserters to come back after a few years' service, he accomplishes another important object—secures, namely, the aid of men who must be of infinite value in any future invasion of Persia, from having had time to acquire the language, as well as to become acquainted with the manners and geography of the country.

These facts, singular as they may seem, are nothing compared with others equally well known to all who have had intercourse with recent travellers in Persia. What strange tales Mr. Ellis could tell about his mission to that country! Vigilant as he was, Nicholas, we fear, was before him in the field, and, if report speaks true, even previous to his arrival, had prejudiced the Persians so strongly against him, that his efforts to save their country from its impending fate were completely paralysed.

In England we pay too little attention to what the em-

peror is doing in Persia. All the cry with us is about Turkey. "We must not let the Russians get Turkey!" is constantly rung in our ears; and while we are busy repeating the cry, Nicholas is quietly securing for himself some conquest or other, of much more importance to him than Turkey will ever be to us.*

* The emperor's views on Persia will again be referred to, in connexion with his schemes against British India, in chap. xxxi. Meantime, the attention of the reader is requested to the following extract of a private letter written by a young baronet, who has enjoyed ample and recent opportunities, in the country itself, for becoming acquainted with the state of Persia; and whose name, did the author feel himself at liberty to communicate it, would be a sufficient guarantee for the independence of his sentiments, as well as for his ability to support them.

" R———t, M———r, December 3, 1838.

"From the columns of the *Times* newspaper of last month, I learn that—at length—Russia has been detected in intrigues with the rulers of the country between Persia and India. These she has been instigating to hostility against India, tempting them with large promises of co-operation and assistance, in the event of the two powers coming to a conflict. To put an end to, and obviate these insidious measures on the part of Russia, the Indian government has taken advantage of the distracted state of the kingdom of Cabool, divided into factions by two brothers, rival competitors for the throne of their father; and has offered its armed assistance to one, on the condition of his becoming a tributary to the British power; which offer, accepted and acted upon, will be the virtual advance of our frontier from the Indus to the confines of Persia, and thus enable us to prevent the machinations of Russia on what will have, in a manner, become our own territory.

"This account, added to my own previous knowledge of the state of these countries, has the appearance of authenticity, and will account for all the rumours of warlike preparations in India—Afghanistan and the Punjaub will doubtless follow the fate, eventually, of their more northern neighbours of Cabool; but these measures have been rendered imperative on the British rulers of India for their own self-defence, as English influence in Persia is completely eclipsed by the preponderating ascendancy which Russia has obtained in the councils of the Shah, by means not the

In the commencement of this chapter we have said that the emperor's ambition does not stoop so low as to consider western Europe worthy of being conquered. Yet there is one exception to this remark. His southern projects certainly occupy most of his thoughts; but there still remain some coveted spots even in the north of Europe—rough but important—to other nations mere deserts, but to him fair as the classic shores of the *Ægean*.—**NORWAY**—the name will startle the reader as much as it did us, for we never dreamt of the project till we had been in the north. Norway is wanted to render

most scrupulous. Almost all the nobles of Persia are notoriously in the pay of Russia. From the Shah down to the meanest peasant, all are to be purchased, and would always attach themselves to the highest bidder. Russia—liberal in bribes—magnanimous in promises—with threats of advancing her legions continually put forward—has obtained a complete ascendancy amongst them; while the timid, fickle, and unsteady policy of England has lost for her the high name she once possessed in the East. * * * * * With a barbarian power, brute force is a more convincing argument than logical reasoning. * * * * * To show the nature of the insidious spirit of perseverance with which Russia has for some time past been endeavouring to gain a footing in Persia, I may mention that the Shah has now in his service a whole regiment of Russian deserters, 600 strong, who have been encouraged to desert by Russia herself. They are his best troops—the only regiment on which an European officer could depend—and are considered the fighting regiment of Persia.

“The population of Persia may, perhaps, be some ten or twelve millions; the whole country, from Dan to Beersheba, an arid desert. Her army, disciplined in the European fashion, nominally amounts to 25,000 men; but, in reality, she has a standing army of only about 16,000, and never could present, in herself or population, any serious obstacle to the Russian hordes. Her security would consist in the barren state of the country, which would occasion great difficulties in supplying an invading army with food.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EMPEROR'S DIPLOMATIC SYSTEM CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF ENGLAND—HIS PLANS FOR AMALGAMATING THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE EMPIRE.

Russian ambassadors selected for their talents—Great confidence reposed in them—High education for the diplomatic service required in Russia, and other parts of the continent—Laxity of our English system—Russian ministers at Constantinople—Boutanieff—Pozzo di Borgo—Maltitz—Matucevitz—D'Oubril—Devotion of his agents to the emperor—Russian spies in the houses of English ambassadors—Large bands of informers in Russia pay all over Europe—The emperor's spies in Paris, and at the German universities—Their activity in Turkey—Alleged interference against England in Canada—Count Nesselrode—Talleyrand—Metternich—The emperor's care in educating young men from the distant provinces—Makes them his warm friends—Professors from strange lands.

THE important characteristic of the emperor's policy, mentioned towards the close of the last chapter, is another of those points connected with Russia which have not yet been sufficiently attended to in other countries—namely, the efficient use which he makes of his diplomatic agents.

It is now a fashion with some to look on ambassadors as most unnecessary burdens in these enlightened times—as mere “ceremonies,” of no further use than to keep up our dignity, by spending our money and neglecting our interests. But the Emperor Nicholas takes quite a different view of their importance. Thinking that a talented ambassador may sometimes do as much as a

strong army, he keeps only the ablest agents in his pay, and, in return, has the satisfaction of seeing them outwit the "good, easy men," who dream that there can be nothing *going on*, because the Russian ambassador gives balls and dinners like the idlest of them. And so he does: the only difference is that, under the noise of fiddles and champagne corks, the smooth Russian conceals the working of the machinery by which he is conducting some snug, advantageous little intrigue to a triumphant conclusion.

That, amongst our representatives abroad, there are some most able and vigilant men it would be unjust to deny; but it is impossible for an Englishman to wander long on the Continent, without finding reason to regret the incapacity and supineness of too many of our diplomatists. There are important posts where British interests are neglected in the most melancholy manner. It is not the present government alone that are to blame for this: it is the system, not the men, that is chargeable with the evils complained of. Our interests at foreign courts will never be efficiently attended to, until we are at some pains to educate in a proper manner those who are aspiring to employment in a diplomatic capacity. It is not enough to send young men abroad for two or three, or even half-a-dozen of years, as *attachés*. Every body who has travelled but six months knows very well how an *attaché* spends his time, and what sort of studies occupy him most. What is wanted is, a careful course of preliminary study for all connected with this service, before they are allowed to cross the Channel.

Englishmen may think it strange to be referred to

Russia for a lesson in anything; but there are, nevertheless, things even in Russia which we might do well to imitate; and this is one of them.

Prussia, too, might furnish us with a useful example in the training of young men for this employment. The plan in these countries is to admit none, even to the lowest step connected with the department, who have not gone through the regular course of study prescribed for this important service. Besides the early training at the gymnasia, there are classes expressly set apart for them in all the more important universities. Languages, history, international law, lectures on the forms and provisions of treaties, constitute part of a diplomatic education. So carefully are the living tongues attended to, that it is no uncommon thing to find students, even *before* they have passed their examination, who, besides being fully masters of their own language, can speak and write with ease French, English, and Italian. Even the more difficult languages are not neglected: in Russia, for instance, the Turkish, Arabic, and other eastern tongues, are indispensable to all looking for employment in this capacity. In Prussia, again, the Russian, which is the most difficult of European languages, is so carefully studied, that we have known an expectant who, without ever having been out of Berlin, was able to translate a pamphlet, which he had written, into that language, so ably, as to receive from St. Petersburg the thanks of the minister at the head of the department to which it related.

How differently is all this managed in England! A young man is sent abroad without any previous training,

ignorant of the very A B C of diplomacy. At the end of a few years he has picked up a little French, the commonest language of the Continent, which shopmen and milliners' apprentices are now ashamed to be ignorant of. But what more has he acquired in the course of this residence abroad? Having had no good foundation to build upon, he has never followed out a regular or well-directed system of study. He could not complete what was never begun, and does not yet know so much of his profession as the young Russian who has not left the gymnasium. Even at this stage, however, there would be a remedy against the incapables, were care taken to grant promotion only to those who deserve it by their talent and zeal in the service. But to be convinced that this is not done, we have only to look to the many accomplished men connected with our embassies, who, after toiling for years through all the drudgery of an unpaid attaché ship, are still little beyond that happy position, while they see younger and less deserving competitors promoted over their heads, for no other reason than that they have more influential, or less scrupulous, friends at home.

It will be said that, in a government like ours, such evils are unavoidable: for no minister can rule without bestowing his patronage on those who can support him. But, admitting the truth of this objection, we still revert to the position from which we started, viz., that ministers have it fully in their power to check the evil to a certain extent, simply by establishing a strict course of preliminary study, expressly for this service, and insisting that, just as in the other professions, none shall be admitted

who cannot stand a free examination on the prescribed branches. This ought to be done, were it only for the sake of the young men themselves. While advancing the public interests, by fixing a high standard of previous study, we should be conferring *on them* the greatest possible favour ;—for the more numerous the resources they have within themselves, the less liable will they be to fall a prey to the temptations and facilities which so thickly beset them, in the most dangerous career that ever rash youth embarked upon.

But to return to Russia. From the lowest vice-consul to the highest ambassador, all intrusted with her interests abroad are chosen on no other principle than that of talent and fitness for the post assigned. It would be impossible to point out a Russian agent in any part of the world who is not most intimately familiar with the language of the people he is amongst ; and of the immense advantages which such a knowledge gives to an ambassador it must be unnecessary to say one word. Were an ambassador's duties confined to the courtesies of the drawing-room, or the formalities of a diplomatic note, his attainments in foreign tongues might be safely bounded by the compliments of a French phrase-book ; but the minister who really does his duty, will sometimes step beyond his own family circle. He will mix with the native society, nay, with the people ; will learn their manners, their sentiments, their prejudices ; and, by the few hours spent now and then in this way, may do his country as much service, as by being ever the first at a review, and the last to leave a ball-room.

The zeal and fidelity with which the emperor's agents

have served him are best shown by the treaties of the last ten years, and by his fast increasing influence, precisely in those very quarters where it was most the interest of other powers to have checked its progress. In all that time the diplomacy of Russia has not met with a single defeat. It has been a period of uninterrupted triumph to her ; of uninterrupted humiliation to every other government of Europe.

That there is little prospect of her interests being neglected in the *next* ten years might be proved by a survey of the characters and talents of the different ministers who now represent the emperor at the various courts of Europe. With the wily and successful Boutanieff, at Constantinople, who never neglects a single chance of advancing Russian interests ; with the talented and literary Maltitz, now at Berlin, and now at London, who can lay aside his German plays when some real drama is going forward ; with the half-English Matucevitz, one week at Naples, and the next at Melton-Mowbray—turning his knowledge of our language and institutions to the more account, that he can so easily assume the appearance of the mere man of fashion, when it suits his purpose to conceal the man of talent ;—with the well-trying and watchful D'Oubril, at Frankfort, the city of diplomats, where deliberations are held that affect the repose of Europe more powerfully than do the decisions of some royal cabinets,*—with the experienced Pozzo di

* ‘ Our new minister to the Germanic Confederation—the son of the Speaker of the House of Commons—though young, has the advantage of having been bred in a good school, where he had every opportunity of obtaining such a knowledge of the difficult and intricate bearings of German politics, as is likely to render him highly useful in his new post.

Borgo, sometimes wandering in search of health, but ever at his post when able counsel is required ;—with these, and others of less note but equal zeal, watching over her interests, there is no probability that Russia will be less ably served in future than she has hitherto been.

The strongest guarantee which the emperor has for the zeal of his agents lies in their enthusiastic attachment to his person and system. There is nothing more remarkable connected with those employed by him, than that, from whatever country they may originally have come, they always show themselves most thoroughly *Russian*. The tact of Nicholas in selecting the men fittest for his purpose, is equalled only by the wonderful quality which he has of inspiring them with *devotion to himself*. Those who serve him at home may not be so warmly attached to him ; on them falls all the trouble arising from his activity and vigilance. But his foreign agents are too far off to feel the lash. They hear the shouts, and catch something of the reflected splendour of his triumphs, without being soiled by the dust that is raised. In short, they see only the bright side of their master's character, and are not in the way to be fretted by his discipline. Instead of the sharp rebukes which he deals unsparingly out to those near him, *they* are receiving only compliments and encouragement. Hence it is that we never yet saw a Russian agent in any part of the world who did not live, as it were, exclusively for the emperor. He may be fond of gaiety, of this or that pursuit, but it is ever secondary to a higher passion—a desire to please his imperial protector, by the most unwearied attention in promoting Russian interests. He

lives but for this, and often is not over-scrupulous about the means he employs in the cause. There are Russian ambassadors at some courts—perhaps all of them do the same—who employ spies in the house of the English minister—who can neither receive a friend, nor give a dinner, without the certainty that some of his servants will report every word that has passed on the occasion. *Per fas aut nefas* should be the motto of Russian diplomats. With them the end justifies the means. If they can serve the emperor by it, they see no harm in breaking through the decencies of life.

Nor is it always to needy lackeys that these gentlemen trust for information. Persons who, from their profession and standing in society, ought to be above such treachery, are often dragged into this base traffic. No Englishman would stoop so low; but there are *foreigners in English pay*, who carry tales from the table they dine at.

In addition to such auxiliaries, the emperor has his regular bands of well-salaried scouts, men and women, Russian and native, in every capital of Europe, whose duty it is to ascertain the sentiments of the leading men towards Russia, and keep the ambassador on the spot, or the political police at St. Petersburg, acquainted with all that may concern the views or wishes of the emperor. It was said the other day, by one residing at Paris, and from his position well qualified to know what is passing, “We have five hundred well-dressed men and women here, moving in the best society, who, if it were allowable to give things their plain names, would be described as nothing else than Russian spies.”

As might be expected from its vicinity to Poland, no country is more carefully watched than Germany. The emperor's vigilance is not satisfied with placing sentinels at the principal cities merely, such as Dresden and Munich, for it is well known that he also maintains a spy at each of the German universities. The state of opinion among the students, from Königsberg to Freiburg in the Brisgau, and from Kiel to Vienna, is as well known to the secret police of St. Petersburg as to the criminal judges of the universities themselves. But Russia may now dispense with this branch of her espionage; for the students of Germany, once such hot-headed revolutionists, are now, happily, most completely cured of all their political enthusiasm.

If Russia be thus vigilant in the West and in the centre of Europe, we need not be surprised to find her even more so in those quarters where, as we have seen, she has a still greater interest at stake. It is chiefly in the East that she puts forth all her means of seduction and *espionage*. The whole of the regions included under that general term are now struggling in the net which she has silently spread over them. Disdaining no aid, however low, provided it can be useful, she descends so far as to employ hotel-keepers, and those most in the way of seeing strangers, for the sake of watching all that go or come. Hence it is no uncommon thing in Greece and Turkey to be told, "Take care what you say before your landlord—he is a Russian." Besides this stationary troop, she has a moveable corps of agents, who are constantly traversing all parts of Turkey and the adjacent regions. No traveller can move any distance without

meeting some of these. It is not pretended that they are engaged in any actual plot, in organising an immediate rebellion; they are merely looking out for what may happen, collecting information, taking notes for the people at head-quarters. The plan which Russia follows in regard to most of these wandering agents, is to attach any person, likely to be useful, to some of the embassies in the south—at Constantinople, or Athens, for instance—from which, after being well instructed in his duties, he is sent out with a kind of roving commission, sometimes for an indefinite period. We lately met one of these agents, a man of great talent and plausibility, who, having presented a memoir to the emperor on the subject of Syria, and the advantages which Russia may derive from a *closer* connexion with it, was forthwith set off to travel through that country, and the less frequented portions of Southern Persia. To conceal their purpose better, these gentlemen always appear to be travelling as private individuals, and at their own expense; but on a little acquaintance with them, it will generally be found that their drafts are payable at the chancery of the nearest Russian legation.

Should any think that we are pushing the emperor's vigilance too far, and giving him by his agents an almost ubiquitous influence, we would remind the reader, that many carry his interference still further. Who is it that incites the Arabs in the neighbourhood of Constantina against the French? The Parisian journalists answer, "The Emperor Nicholas." What has stirred up the disturbances in Canada? "Russian gold," say the American newspapers—which further state that there are agents

. of the emperor busily at work, even in the United States, rallying the malcontents against England ! After these specimens of what is believed by some about the extent of Russian interference, who shall accuse us of exaggeration in saying, that it is so actively exerted in countries where the emperor makes no secret of his intrigues ?

In considering the diplomacy of Russia, it must not be forgotten, that while much of its efficacy is attributable to the tact and vigilance of the emperor himself, great merit is also due to his minister for foreign affairs, Count Nesselrode, next to Metternich, the ablest statesman in Europe. In talent, honesty, and greatness of mind he is infinitely superior to the overrated Talleyrand. Almost every cause that Talleyrand supported throughout a long and tortuous career was at last unsuccessful. His touch brought misfortune ; for of the dozens of governments to which he swore allegiance, and lent his counsel, each succeeding one proved as insecure as its predecessor. The *only* government which Nesselrode has supported is at this moment stronger and more flourishing than ever. When we have such a minister to deal with, it need not be stated that there is no court in Europe where England would require to have an able representative so much as here. Our ambassador at St. Petersburg ought to be a man of long experience in diplomacy—of great firmness, yet of much courtesy of manner—of unimpeachable integrity, and possessed of a high sense of honour—intimately versed in all the complicated interests of his country, both political and commercial—and, above all, inaccessible to flattery. A man without talent would be led by Count Nesselrode into every snare ; and a vain man would be-

come the emperor's tool in a single week : for there is nothing that Nicholas excels in more than in detecting the weak side of those with whom he is brought in contact ; and there is no one who can employ the discovery more effectually in advancing his own purposes.

Next to the efficacy of his diplomacy, there is nothing which shows the talent of Nicholas more remarkably than the means he employs to consolidate and keep together the heterogeneous tribes of his vast empire. It would take volumes to describe the system by which the accomplished Pole and the rude fishermen of Kamtschatka—Turk, Tartar, and Fin—Cossack and Georgian—Bashkir and Kirghisian—are all kept in the same order and subjection, as if they spoke but one tongue, and had but one code of manners. One of the methods employed is all that can here be mentioned ; but it is a most efficient one—that of bringing the young and talented from the remotest provinces, to be educated either in the capital, or at Moscow. It is thus no uncommon thing to find a youth from the foot of Mount Ararat seated on the same form with one from the shores of the White Sea. It is the emperor's particular study to make himself known to the scholars from remote provinces. There are some schools expressly for such, and these he visits frequently, speaks kindly to the boys, bestows on them some mark of his favour,—in short, *wins* them, makes them *his*, and then sends them back to their native districts in some official capacity. The youths are, of course, devoted to him for life, and do all they can to inspire their countrymen with the same enthusiasm and love for the

emperor, which they themselves feel. Carrying with them the habits and improvements of the more refined society in which they have been brought up, they also aid in spreading, gradually, and without violence, an uniform system of manners throughout the whole empire. Those, however, who show more than ordinary talent, or aptitude for some particular service, are retained in the capital and promoted to offices, in which many of them run a brilliant and useful career. In this way, the stranger in Russia is often meeting people with the dress and manners of the most finished gentlemen, who afterwards startle him by the announcement that they come originally from some distant spot, which he had hitherto regarded as the haunt of none but the Samoeid or the Kalmuck. It needs some time before we can look without wonder on professors from the mouths of the Don, and imperial tutors from the shores of the Caspian, speaking French and English as if born in our far West. One of the gentlemen who accompanied the Grand-duke Michael in his tour through England is a native of Astracan.

This system of amalgamation has also been attempted on a more extensive scale, viz., by colonising one part of the empire with settlers from another. The natives, for instance, of some of the recent conquests in Asia have been encouraged to remove to some parts of southern Russia, bordering on the Crimea; but the policy of this experiment is much questioned by those who know the habits of the people.

CHAPTER XXX.

REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT IN RUSSIA—DISCONTENT OF THE ARMY, AND LIBERAL OPINIONS OF THE NOBLES—POLAND—WAR IN THE CAUCASUS.

Elements of discord in the empire itself—Causes of dissatisfaction felt by the nobles—Discontent among the officers of the army—The emperor's harsh and arbitrary conduct towards them—Insults them—Partiality to foreigners—Persecution of liberalism—Secret political associations among the nobility, especially in Moscow—Prosecutions—Restrictions on travelling—Spread of free opinions—Rumours of plots—Of a revolution—Its probable object—Republics to be established—State of Poland—Misrepresented by Russian writers—War in the Caucasus.

ADMITTING, as we fully do, that there is much wisdom and energy displayed in the system employed for keeping all the parts of this vast empire together, yet we do not see any reason for believing that they are likely to remain united so long as many writers have imagined. However well-cemented the union appears, the elements of disruption are even now at work. The present emperor himself may live to see the Tartar huntsman returning to his steed, and the Persian shepherd to his flock. Nay, in Russia Proper, in the very heart of his hereditary dominions, there is a little worm at work which may undermine his throne. The discontent of HIS NOBLES is what we allude to. The same spirit which has unseated other Tzars—and, also, how rudely!—now menaces him.

The causes of his unpopularity with this powerful

class are various. Some have private and deep causes of dislike—some have been annoyed by his insulting and tyrannical conduct towards them as public functionaries—some complain of a denial of justice—some of an arbitrary interference with their family rights—some have fathers and kindred pining in Siberia to avenge—and all have, as they believe, cause of complaint against Nicholas, in his attempts to enfranchise the serfs—to raise the lower classes at the expense of their masters. This last cause of dissatisfaction every Englishman will of course consider honourable to the emperor; but it is one which, in Russia, operates against him perhaps more powerfully than any other: for the Russian noble, as has been already stated, looks on his serfs as he would on beasts of burden: they belong to him as much as the stones and trees of his estate; and every attempt to rob him of them, or to render them less valuable, is attacking him, not only in his most deeply-rooted prejudices, but in his dearest interests. Thus it is that those very measures—his efforts, namely, in behalf of the great mass of the people—which *we* would consider the most likely to strengthen the emperor's throne, are precisely those which most threaten its security.

Nowhere is the spirit of dissatisfaction more violently at work than in that very body which has usually been looked upon as the emperor's surest stronghold—the army. Of the spirit of the common soldiers we heard nothing unfavourable; but, admitting them to be quite free from infection, their allegiance cannot be much relied on when the officers are almost universally disaffected. As alluded to above, in speaking of the navy, this discontent

may be traced to the captious and tyrannical nature of the discipline to which they are subject. Officers—not merely young men, but old and experienced veterans also—are punished in the most arbitrary manner. Things, which in other countries would not be noticed at all, are here visited with indiscriminating vengeance. The merest trifle—a boot-strap too narrow, or a collar awry—is censured with all the severity of a grave neglect of duty. For a word, a look, a nothing, an officer may be degraded to the ranks in an instant, without trial or right of appeal. When any manœuvre is wrong performed, all the blame falls on those in command: insulting words are used by the emperor himself, in the hearing of the privates; and some say that even *blows* have been inflicted on gray-haired men fit to be his masters in their art. Is it enough to a man of high feeling, that an apology is afterwards made, for insults that are only more degrading when inflicted by one who cannot be called to account for them?

Degradation to the ranks is a very frequent punishment; but, though frequent, we never heard it spoken of but with a bitterness which showed that even banishment to Siberia is looked on as less disgraceful.

Banishment to the army of the Caucasus appears to be another punishment resorted to. From the harassing nature of the warfare, and the dangers of the climate, it is always looked upon as equivalent to sentence of death. Exile to Siberia, which, though not so fatal to life, is more degrading than the Caucasus, awaits only those officers who have been guilty of grave offences.

For what trifling causes punishment may be inflicted

is shown by an anecdote much talked of during our stay at St. Petersburg. A young officer, of amiable manners, believed that he had gained the esteem and favour of the Grand-duke Michael. His august protector carried his condescension so far, that he had even deigned to visit him occasionally at his apartments. But the favour of princes is fatal and fleeting. He one day entered the apartment of his humble friend unannounced—the youth was in undress—contrary to regimental rules, he was *without his sash*. The moment the door opened he knew what would befall him. “I am lost!” was his exclamation; and the foreboding was but too true—he was instantly ordered to the Caucasus!

The partiality shown to foreigners is another cause of discontent with the higher classes. Russia, they say, has been long enough under foreign tutelage, and can now take care of herself, without having strangers thrust into all the most important and lucrative posts of the public service. Against the Germans, in particular, the outcry is very loud.

The nobles are also galled by the severity with which *liberalism* is persecuted. In Russia, everything is permitted to a nobleman—*except to have opinions*. If he has so wide a license in other respects, every precaution is employed to prevent him from falling into this offence. When the slightest suspicion is entertained against an individual, his words, his visits, his associates, are all most strictly watched. In fact, society is so extensively infested with spies, that even in his most private hours a man is not safe to speak his mind.

This system of repressing all political heresy, so rigo-

rously enforced against private individuals, is of course doubly severe in the army. Nothing is so dangerous for an officer as to speak, nay, *to think*, on politics. Even *in his sleep* a man would need to be guarded; for there are instances of words spoken in dreams having been turned against the unconscious self-accuser.

That secret associations exist among the nobles, both in Moscow and in other parts of the empire, is a fact which does not rest merely on the vague testimony of passing travellers: it is confirmed by the public, though not always *published*, acts of the government itself. As strangers, we, of course, had no opportunity of knowing the truth of all that is whispered on this subject; but no foreigner can be long in Russia without hearing the ominous words, "*The emperor trembles before the nobles of Moscow.*" We were repeatedly assured, on what we consider undoubted authority, that many individuals of the highest rank had lately been punished for having joined these societies. Few sentences of this kind find their way to the newspapers; but one of the most recent prosecutions affected so many individuals, that it has reached all the journals of Europe;—it is that of the twelve noblemen of Moscow, who were arrested in 1837, and have since been banished to Siberia, under circumstances of unusual cruelty.

The emperor was long and faithfully represented at Moscow by Prince Galitzin, one of the most enlightened and patriotic of the old nobility. There can be little doubt that, but for the influence of this distinguished nobleman, political discontent would long ere now have risen much higher in that part of the kingdom. Under

a despotism, however, it is a dangerous thing to merit the high character now given of the prince: since we left Russia, he has incurred the emperor's displeasure, for not having been sufficiently zealous in denouncing these political associations. He is no longer governor of Moscow. But will his disgrace arrest the tide of liberal opinions? It will be but the signal for increased activity and increased caution, throughout all the wide ramifications of the secret societies, which, in defiance of the exertions made to put them down, exist in every part of the empire.

Yes, all these persecutions of opinion are vain. The day is gone by, even in Russia, when liberal sentiments can be kept down by proscription and banishment. No body of men on the continent have travelled so much as the Russian nobility of the higher class; and it is impossible that men so intelligent as many of them are could live long in free countries without imbibing free opinions; which, in place of being checked, are only more widely diffused by the severe measures employed to repress them. With nations, as with individuals, that which is most strictly forbidden is what we most often indulge in. Were the government less severe in proscribing everything like liberalism, and all that can be interpreted to border upon it, the taste for it might soon diminish; but, as a natural consequence of the zeal and violence displayed against free opinions, it is now "the fashion" to be a liberal.

Not satisfied with punishing liberalism when detected, the emperor has at last struck at what is considered the root of the evil, by prohibiting his subjects from travelling so much as formerly. It is now difficult for a man of

any rank to obtain permission to leave the country at all ; and those who do so are on no account allowed to visit France, where the most dangerous lessons in politics are supposed to be given. England is not yet erased from the Russian's travelling map, but it may soon be. Private individuals are not suffered to stay abroad more than five years, under any pretext : those who do not return within that period are punished with confiscation of estates and property of every kind.

From these restrictions, of course, all are exempted who travel as spies and purveyors of intelligence ; yet even these are under the strictest restraints when away. No Russian, while in a foreign country, can consider himself free ; the terror with which he regards his ambassador, at whatever place he may for the time be, is only short of that with which he regards the emperor at home. Trembling before the spies of the one, as much as before the police of the other, he must report himself, present himself, and conduct himself, with a deference which amuses the English traveller, happily exempt from all such annoyance.

To these causes of discontent many others might be added ; but enough has been said to enable the reader to understand the grievances which have given rise to those

“ ——— tales of peril, from dark plots and snares—
From foes and discontented troops and nations—
I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries.”

The question then comes to this : Will the support of the lower classes—for the same impartiality which bids

us state that he is disliked by the nobles, compels us to add that he is enthusiastically beloved by the great body of his subjects—will this support of the humble counterbalance the enmity of the powerful? In a fair fight, or under a constitutional government, it undoubtedly would; but in Russia, unhappily, there are other means for getting rid of an obnoxious sovereign, besides those of open contest in the field or in the senate.

The existence of this feeling against the emperor is now matter of notoriety. The nomination of commissioners, in the course of the autumn of 1837, to inquire into charges of conspiracy affecting many individuals of rank in various parts of the empire, is a *public* confirmation of that which all acquainted with Russia must have been familiar from *private* sources long ago. The foreign journals assert that hundreds of the accused have been banished to Siberia, by these commissions, within the last few months. In making the above statements, therefore, we do not profess to have been revealing anything new, but have merely repeated facts, which, though not generally known throughout Europe, are amply attested by the public measures of the Russian government itself.

In connexion with this subject, however, it ought to be stated, that the emperor has it completely in his own power to convert any bad feelings which may exist against him into those of warm attachment. His nobles are men of high spirit, and, in many respects, of enlightened views: the emperor himself is of a frank and noble character. Let him no longer yield to the counsels of an unfeeling policy; but, following the more

generous impulse of his own heart, let him throw himself confidently on the better feelings of the aristocracy. Let him grant them, under due restraint, the privileges for which they long—let him deprive them of all excuse for continuing to oppress their serfs, by abandoning his own rights over themselves—let him finally modify the system of discipline now in force against his officers, and from that moment his throne will be based on a rock, which the united strength of Europe shall not be able to shake. If he wishes his name to live in history, as it is said he does, what more certain prospect to fame can he find, than that which he would command by becoming the benefactor of the higher, as he already is of the lower, classes of his subjects—in one word, by securing for himself that most rare, almost unheard-of, distinction among kings and rulers, of being a VOLUNTARY REFORMER !

Among the probable *objects* of a revolution in Russia, we were surprised to find that the establishing of republics is supposed to be the general aim. The conspiracy detected in 1825 (the discovery of which, it is well known, clouded with sorrow the dying hours of the benevolent Alexander) contemplated the breaking up of the empire into separate kingdoms ; but the scheme most generally in favour at present would seem to be that now mentioned. If the word *republic* sound strange in connexion with Russia, it should be remembered that, at least in some parts of what is now called Russia, republics have already existed. The time is long gone by ; but the traditions of liberty, or even of its semblance, do not altogether die, even under centuries of despotism. That the nobles—

among whom alone such remembrances are to be found—have no intention of giving power to the people by these institutions, will surprise no one, after what has been said above. They would make a revolution entirely for their own benefit: they do not wish to free the people, but to enslave them more completely. Surely, then, they have chosen a wrong name, in styling their contemplated governments “Republics!”

In addition to all these sources of domestic alarm, another remains to be named—POLAND. This country is far from being so hopelessly humbled, as to entitle the emperor to dismiss all fear regarding it. Confiscation—Siberia—death—are the gentle words by which he is governing it. He is fast making it a desert, but is not thereby making it more securely his own. The very severity of the measures employed against them, as might be expected, are driving the people more irresistibly to plot for their freedom. It makes one weep to hear what is hourly done in that fair land. We have heard its woes recited by *a woman*, and the appeal was irresistible. Only by stealth, and in whispers, could she name the land of her birth—but when she found that Poland was not yet without friends—that even strangers had a kind word to raise in her defence—she was overcome with joy. The tale she had to tell was a thrilling one—*nobles* driven through the streets with the scourge—*women* dragged to infamy—children (!) punished for conspiracy! These are a few of the sights of horror daily witnessed in Poland. Yet they tell us that the emperor’s speech at Warsaw was but a hasty ebullition—mere words—threats which he never intended to exe-

cute. Why, not many months had passed till they were more than executed;—as if it had been intended that their fulfilment should be a mockery of those constant declarations of his agents, who are employed to tell the world so frequently, that Poland, under his benignant rule, is tranquil, happy, flourishing. Yes, *flourishing* it is, in the Russian sense of the term; for barracks and fortifications and prisons are springing up on every side. The large properties are fast passing into more faithful hands. Could the ill-fated Poles in France and England but see the St. Petersburg newspapers, they would have full proof that Poland is flourishing; for almost every week they contain long lists of the Russian favourites, on whom the emperor is bestowing their castles and broad lands. The work of spoliation is going steadily forward; ere long, there will be little left to bestow: but that with all this, however “flourishing” his flatterers may call it, the emperor himself does not consider Poland very “secure,” his large armies and violent measures very clearly testify.

Nor can the struggle for liberty, still going on in the Causasus, be omitted in this enumeration of the circumstances which weaken the emperor's hands. The war in that singular region, long considered a mere passing revolt, has now assumed an aspect which could never have been anticipated. Will none of the European powers strike a blow, nor even lift a voice, in behalf of these brave mountaineers, who, after years of unremitting warfare, are still able to bear up against all the might of the largest empire in the world? A contest which better merits the sympathy of every generous breast has

not arisen in modern times. Never, perhaps, has the world had a more remarkable example of the efforts that men will make for liberty. Some, well qualified to judge, maintain that the emperor will never be able to subdue them ; and in support of this assertion, they appeal to the irresistible fact, that now, at the close of 1838, the power of Russia is not more firmly established among the Circassians than it was at the close of 1836, when Captain Spencer visited their country, and made his spirit-stirring appeal in their behalf to the English nation. It is even asserted that the Muscovite cause is becoming more and more desperate every day ; for now the Circassians, in place of merely acting on the defensive, are about to sally from their mountains, in order to invade the adjoining provinces of Russia while, it is also stated, the emperor, in addition to his mountain-foes, has to contend against a still more ominous opposition ; namely, insubordination in his own army, whose patience has at length given way under the prolonged miseries of this most fatiguing and inglorious war.

Another strong ground of hope for the Circassians may be discovered in the favourable sentiments with which their struggle is regarded by the surrounding tribes, all of whom consider the cause so good, that nothing but force has kept them from joining it. So strong is this sympathy, that, as is not unknown to many in England, the chiefs of Georgia and Mingrelia, at one time, actually subscribed a "round-robin," pledging themselves to rise against Russia. The document was sent to the Shah Abbas Mirza, who was expected to aid the attempt ; but (will it be credited ?) Persia is so com-

pletely under Russian control, that its monarch had no alternative but to transmit the paper to St. Petersburg. The consequences to those who had signed it may easily be inferred.

We have heard from a gentleman, filling an important situation under the English government, who visited the country not long ago, that nothing can be more favourable for defence than the positions now taken up by the gallant warriors. A land of mountains, some of which are 13,000 feet, and few under 8,000 feet high, affords so many capabilities for defence, that he considers it next to impossible to subdue them. Nothing, he says, can be more picturesque than the aspect of this region, as beheld from the sea. The eye commands nothing but mountains of the wildest forms, separated by savage ravines, which are filled with most luxuriant and beautiful vegetation. Strange to say, the only *plains* of this region are on the *summits* of the mountains; while the valleys, which in other mountainous countries are usually the paths to the higher spots, are here all but impassable. The winter is exceedingly severe, and continues long; but no sooner have the snows disappeared than vegetation bursts at once into summer splendour. The climate is not so bad as the mortality in the emperor's army would lead us to suppose; for the numerous deaths among the Russians are attributable to the position of their forts and encampments, which they have never been able to place anywhere except on the low and swampy levels that extend in some places between the mountains and the sea. The excellent authority referred to was nearly in the heart of the principal scene of war,

and states that no Russian vessel can come near the shore without being fired upon; for the very sufficient reason, that almost every landing-place is commanded by a height, from which it has not been possible to dislodge the enemy. The war he considers as nothing but a ruinous hobby of the emperor: it can lead to no result but waste of life and treasure. The people hate the Russians so inveterately, that nothing but the humane tenure of complete extermination can render Circassia a sure possession of the emperor.

To this enumeration of the causes which render the emperor's position a less enviable one than it is generally supposed to be much might still be added. More discontented nations—more ill-secured, because unjustly acquired, conquests might be named.

Is Finland safe? Its inhabitants are Swedes—in descent, in manners, in affections—and wait but the signal to rid themselves of a hated yoke. Is Livonia secure? Its people still have a warm leaning to their German fatherland. Can Ingria be relied upon?—can Courland?

But we shall stop. Enough has been said to show that Russia, so far from being the strongly-cemented and well-harmonized mass, which it is generally supposed to be, is, in fact, the most fragile and ill-assorted empire in the world. Nicholas is throned on a volcano.

It is not alleged, however, that the considerations now enumerated are sufficient to entitle us to prophesy that the emperor will, under no circumstances whatever, be tempted to try the fortune of war. But that they have great weight in keeping him from disturbing the peace

of Europe too rashly is well known ; and, at all events, they ought to be kept in mind as circumstances which, if a war should really break out, tend to render the emperor less formidable, and to make it probable that, so far as Russia is concerned, the contest will not be of such long duration as if its warlike chief were untrammelled by fears of domestic commotion.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE EMPEROR'S PROJECTS AGAINST BRITISH INDIA CONSIDERED—ALLIANCE WITH PRUSSIA.

March through Persia to Hindustan—This conquest a favourite theme with French writers—Actually planned and contemplated by Russia—Its absurdity and impracticability—Can be easily counteracted by England—Favourable stations for us in the Persian Gulf, &c.—Allies of the emperor—Doubtful friendship with Austria—Prussian aid—Views of that state on Hamburg.

WE have now hurriedly and imperfectly stated some of the reasons which induce us to believe that, in place of being able to add to his dominions, the emperor will for the next few years have sufficient employment in keeping together those which he already possesses. However ambitious he may be to distinguish himself as a warrior, he will not, for the present, attempt to disturb the peace of Europe. That he will ultimately do so, when Poland is more secure, Circassia conquered, and internal factions appeased, there can be little doubt; and therefore it is that we urge on England the necessity of being prepared for a struggle.

Should the emperor find us too strong to give him any chance at sea, it is generally thought that he will attack us by land, on what he believes to be our most vulnerable side,—through our Indian possessions. With French writers, at least, this has long been a frequent and a favourite theme. They every now and then remind us

that it is among the distant defiles of the Sutlege, or the yet more distant and equally probable jungles of Coimbatore, that the doom of proud England will be sealed; or sometimes they make the discovery that the Punjaub or the Sunderbunds will be the more fitting scene of our humiliation—of a fall, from which we shall never rise.

When enumerating the emperor's projects at a former page, we did not mention this one amongst them, because we were then giving only those which we considered most practicable. For, although no one acquainted with history will assert, in the face of so many instances of its having been actually accomplished, that this passage is altogether impossible, yet few can look upon it as an enterprise very likely to succeed in the present day, and with modern troops. Undeterred, however, by any regard to its difficulty, Nicholas, there is every reason to believe, *has*, at times, cherished a scheme something like that now alluded to. With eagle eye he has surveyed the wide space from the Caspian to the mouths of the Hoogly, and, in dreams, seen his banner waving on the ruins of Fort William. His empire, beginning with conquered Greece, would then extend from the eastern side of the Adriatic to the “solar shores of Ganges;” from Cape Comorin to the ridge of the Himmalayas, and thence, in one flight, to the Arctic shores. This would be something like an empire for a man to breathe in. And who shall say that it is unreasonably large? It will only be a little more extensive than that ruled over by Alexander, or than the Caliphate, under Haroun-al-Raschid, when it spread from the Pyrenees to the Indus.

Absurd as the project may appear to those who have not turned their attention to such subjects, the miles have been counted, the rivers crossed, the mountains scaled; the whole scheme stands among the imperial archives at St. Petersburg, as fair and legible as engineer's quill and surveyor's compass can make it. Neither does the project date merely from yesterday. It is at least as old as the time of Peter the Great: for, in the account of his expedition against Persia, it is expressly stated, that he had long meditated the scheme of ruling in the Caspian Sea by a powerful marine, "and thus to cause the commerce of Persia, and of a part of India, to pass through his states."—(Voltaire's *Peter the Great*, chap. xvi.) Yet, however long, or however fondly the project may have been cherished, it is but a dream. The emperor and his wise men have been planning an impossibility. Mountains, that are easily scaled on paper, prove but a rough path when an army comes to climb through them inch after inch. Allow this second hero of Macedon to be actually on his march, how many months would it take him to reach even the most northerly point of the British frontier? Admitting even that Russia were mistress of Persia,—as she is very likely to be at no distant day,—and that she could secure the neutrality or the co-operation of the other intervening tribes—of which there is little probability—where would she find means of maintaining such a numerous force as would be requisite for any attempt of the kind? How organize supplies through at least 2000 miles,—the distance to be crossed before reaching the frontiers of the countries which divide the English territories from Persia?

—and how find her way through at least 1000 miles more, before she touch even the nearest frontier of British India? She must first give fertility to sands which never were green; and raise a numerous population where man is fast disappearing. Having accomplished these wonders, she must next charm mountains and rivers from their stubborn positions. But, until these and many other impossibilities have been achieved, it will be vain for her to think of marching on an invasion, regarded by every one acquainted with the countries as utterly impracticable under existing circumstances.

All the reasoning that has been employed on this subject is so ably condensed in the following passage, written twenty years ago, and, consequently, at a time when the subject would be more dispassionately considered than under the present excitement regarding the enterprises of Russia, that it must carry conviction to every impartial mind. "That the passage is possible," says an able writer, "no one who recollects the many similar transits in Sir John Malcolm's history can safely venture to deny. But in what condition an European army would arrive at Delhi, after fighting its way from the fords of the Araxes; what would be the health of the troops after passing so many different climates; how many cannon would have been abandoned in the sands of Durra and Beloochistan; how many horsemen would 'tighten their reins' in despair, when the ridges of the Indian Caucasus rose before them; and with what remaining strength and spirit the invader would be enabled to cope with forces as well disciplined as his

own in the best of times,—are subjects, we apprehend, to be quite as seriously considered by those who meditate such an attack, as by those who are called upon to resist it.” *

But the strongest argument of all against this much-vaunted threat, lies in the fact that, before the invading army could have got through the first desert, the fate of the Russian empire would be decided in a very different quarter. Ere England could be injured in even the remotest of her wide-spread dependencies, Russia would have received her death-blow in the most vital point. Hindustan is many months' journey away from St. Petersburg; but Cronstadt is within a few days' sail of England.

If England chose to exert herself, however, even at this the eleventh hour, she could still do much to counteract the emperor's influence in Persia; for, both sovereign and people lean to us more than to their Muscovite conquerors. If no other way remains for strengthening ourselves against the consequences of Russian predominance in those regions, why delay so strangely to secure the long-talked-of islands in the gulf of Persia, which, when fortified, as they could easily be, would give us a Gibraltar in the East, that may one day be as useful to us, as the one which cost us dearer in the Mediterranean? We are surely as able to pay for these places—if payment be the question—as the Americans are to pay for Pola in the Adriatic, negotiations about the purchase of which are still going on between the Austrians and them.

* *Quarterly Review*, 1816, vol. xv., p. 291.

What is lawful for them to do in Europe cannot be unlawful for us in Asia.

Without entering into further details regarding the ambitious projects of the Emperor Nicholas, we may now try to answer the important question, Who are the allies that are to support him in accomplishing these daring schemes? For, bold and confident though he is, no one will suppose him capable of attempting so much with his own single hand.

The support of France—the probability of his obtaining which has already been hinted at—is by far too doubtful to entitle him to place much confidence upon it in the hour of need. She might join him in a war against England; but in any other quarrel that could arise, the interests of France and Russia would be so directly opposed to each other, that no fear need be entertained that these powers would long march hand in hand. We are willing to admit, however, that the partiality which the emperor has of late been showing to the Bonaparte family may have more in it than meets the eye. All who know the French, must know that the very name of Napoleon still acts on them like a spell. Is Nicholas, by courting the connexions of their great emperor, seeking to secure the good-wishes of the French nation, under a belief that they may yet avail him more than those of their king?

Some regard the government of the United States as the sure supporter of Russia. Having, say they, no naval power in Europe on whom he can reckon as a steady ally, he is forced to cross the Atlantic, for that

kind of aid, which, in the event of a rupture with Britain, is precisely that which he most needs. That there has been some coquetting betwixt them is beyond a doubt ; and the distinguished regard with which the emperor treats all travellers from the United States shows at least his anxiety to obtain a good name in America. Their government, however, is too wise to unite with him in any quarrel in which he would have England for an enemy, until he can hold out more tempting advantages than he has yet been able to offer.

Others say that Russia reckons strongly on her alliance with Austria. But though there be a seeming friendship, there is no real good-will between those two courts. The pride of Austria has been too deeply wounded by Russia in various ways, of late, to make it probable that the present alliance can be of long duration. Austria, from the first, *foresaw* the evil consequences of the success of Russia in the recent war with Turkey ; but the peaceful policy in which she so honestly perseveres prevented her from interfering at the time. Now, however, she *feels* the full shame of her too conciliating system, in the hourly insults she was preparing for herself, when she permitted Russia to plant her forts and her custom-houses at the mouths of the Danube—when she inconsiderately committed the water-gates of her fair empire to the keeping of her most powerful enemy. Her turn for vengeance is not yet come, but come it will. Let a good occasion arise—let another European war break out—and it will soon be seen how cordial is the amity between Austria and Russia.

Nicholas, however, has another German ally, and one

on whom he knows that he can reckon in every emergency. There cannot be the least doubt that the friendship between him and the court of Berlin is extremely close, and, for the rest of Europe, pregnant with danger. To use a familiar expression, they *understand* each other most thoroughly. There is no scheme of the emperor's so ambitious that Prussia will not support him in it. Nicholas cannot add a single league to his territory, but at the expense of the honour or of the interests of some of the greater powers of Europe: Prussia, on the contrary, has nothing to lose, and may even gain by the aggrandizement of Russia. On Prussia, therefore, the emperor relies with unbounded confidence; and her friendship would be of infinite value to him, were it only as a barrier against the powers of the West. In the event of a war with France, Prussia could at least keep the enemy at bay, till the Russian troops should be brought back from more distant fields.

We have heard many Prussians say, that the present close alliance between their government and that of Russia is a mere "family affair"—nothing more than a kind of gratitude to the all-powerful emperor of the Russians, for having been the first to raise a Prussian princess to a throne of the highest rank. "How," say they—the liberal party in Prussia—"how can we, a civilized, and now, by universal admission, a highly enlightened nation, have any real sympathy with such a barbarous people as the Russians, and so despotic a ruler as their Tzar? It is to England, the land of free institutions, that we lean, and her should we wish to have

for an ally, because it is for institutions like hers that we wait, and, ere long, *must have*."

But though the sympathies of the more intelligent in Prussia are in favour of England, the government is most decidedly Russian. The prudence of the present king—a prudence learnt from afflictions the longest continued, the most humiliating, and the most severe endured by any monarch of our eventful century—keeps him from embarking in war in conjunction with Russia. So long as Frederick William is spared, Prussia will not rashly engage in a game which at one time cost her so dear: but, in the course of nature, his days cannot now be many, and when "another shall reign in his stead," the ardour of a younger king will soon forget the sage counsels of his more temperate father. The Crown-Prince, it is well known, is a most decided—we should say more—a most uncompromising admirer of Russia and her policy.

There is a way, too, by which the emperor can secure the support of every man in Prussia—liberals, soldiers, and philosophers. Much as they gained, both in territory and in power, at the Congress of Vienna, the Prussians are not yet satisfied. They must have *more*. They have as yet no name as a naval power, and notwithstanding their long line of sea-coast, and a large population of hardy fishermen, the nursery of their future navy, they can never hope to possess any weight at sea, so long as the Baltic is but a Danish duck-pond, with a sluice which England can shut at pleasure in summer, and which in winter not even the English themselves can open. "*Prussia must have a footing on the North Sea*"—

we are repeating words which we have heard a hundred times in Berlin and in the provinces—“*in plainer terms, she must have Hamburg, and the mouth of the Elbe.*” Then will the model frigate of the good King William of England—a present more flattering to the vanity of the Prussians than any they ever received—be no longer an empty compliment, a mere show for the holiday folks of Potsdam; then will the naval tastes of their amiable and gifted Prince Adelbert have full scope for development; then, in one word, will Prussia have fulfilled her destiny, and attained in Europe that rank to which she is entitled.

We repeat, that the emperor has but to hold out this flattering prospect to the Prussians, to pledge himself to satisfy their ambitious claims, and there is not a man in the kingdom that will not aid him in any war he may undertake.

Let it not be imagined, however, that this statement is made from bad feeling to the Prussians. On the contrary, there is no nation on the continent whom we consider more worthy of the esteem of Englishmen; for there is none more enlightened, none more brave, none (we are not speaking of the government, but of the nation) more kindly disposed towards England, and none of whose good opinion England has more reason to be proud. In saying, as we have now done, that they are eager for the aggrandizement of Prussia, we say nothing that does them shame; and we do it in the hope that England may find means of detaching them from an alliance, not more unfavourable to her, than it will in the end prove to be to them. The sentiments of the great

mass of the Prussian nation being, as already stated, so favourable to England and English principles, we ought to employ every means to cherish that partiality.

Much good has already been done in this respect, through the agency of Lord William Russell, the vigilant representative of Great Britain at the court of Berlin; and if our government give him efficient aid in carrying out his enlightened views, both the sovereign and the people of Prussia would be soon weaned from their projects of conquest; and the two greatest protestant powers of Europe would once more cement the bonds of a friendship, which ought never to have been even temporarily interrupted, and which cannot be long dissolved, without the most fatal detriment to the highest interests of the whole human race.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EMPEROR'S PARTIALITY TO THE ENGLISH—INFLUENCE AND SERVICES OF LORD DURHAM

Russian nobles unfavourable to a war with England—Nicholas himself fond of Englishmen—His attention to our travelling countrymen—Captain — in the imperial palace—The emperor's anxiety to know the state of public opinion in England—Reads our newspapers and debates in parliament—His respect for Lord Durham—Favours obtained by him for Englishmen—Has removed many of the emperor's prejudices regarding England—Mistakes about us on the Continent.

WE are far from believing that the Emperor Nicholas, even with the certainty of that support from Prussia alluded to in the preceding chapter, will be eager to provoke a war with any of the European powers. Some of the facts connected with the internal dissensions of his empire, which may be regarded as securities for his good behaviour towards Europe in general, have been already enumerated ; and we shall now state some of those considerations, which are likely to prevent him from seeking a rupture with England in particular.

Among the reasons which will restrain him from going rashly to war with England, is the sure knowledge which he possesses, that such a war would be most unpopular among his own subjects. England can do much better without Russia, than Russia can without England. His nobles have not yet forgotten the embarrassing diminution which their incomes experienced, during the adher-

ence of Russia to the Continental System of Napoleon, after the treaty of Tilsit. They know that the moment we refuse to take the hemp and other produce of their estates, their best source of income is dried up. In Russia, as in other countries, rich and poor depend on each other: if the peasant cannot dispose of the tallow which he hoards, the nobleman cannot look for his dues.

Another reason for believing that there is no chance of an immediate war between Russia and England lies in the emperor's character. Though he has at times cherished wild projects of ambition, yet, those who know him best maintain that, in his calmer moments, he has no serious desire to measure weapons with us. If he be increasing his fleet, and keeping his army on so strong a footing, it is only with a view to be ready for war when war becomes inevitable. Instead of hating the English, it is said that there is no nation which he more admires, and none of which he is so anxious to acquire the good opinion. He is willing to make every sacrifice, in order to remove our prejudices against him and Russia.

As a proof of this, it must be stated, that in no country are English travellers treated with such distinction; the very name is a passport. Where travellers of other nations are treated with neglect, the Englishman meets with the warmest attention. "*We* have no merit in using you well," said the amiable Countess —, to whom we were expressing our gratitude for the courteous attentions received from her and her husband, who holds an official situation in one of the most important divisions of Central Russia: "in showing attention to the

English who come our way, my husband is only obeying the express commands of the emperor."

Nor is it through others merely that he shows his regard for our countrymen: he is personally at much pains to render their stay in Russia agreeable. In fact, his attention to English visitors who have once become known to him is extreme. They are invited to court; honoured with much of his conversation; recognised in the streets, to the great astonishment of the natives; and have every facility given them for visiting all that may interest them. Nor are these attentions extended merely to men of high station—to the duke or earl, whether minister or not, who may stray into the Russian territories once in ten years. In that case it might be said that it is to their rank; not their country, that the homage is paid: but he is equally attentive to those devoid of all claim from rank or official consequence. This was particularly evinced by the distinguished kindness shown to an officer of the English navy—at present, we believe, on the South-American station—who visited St. Petersburg a few summers ago, without any especial introductions beyond those of gentlemanly manners and great zeal for his profession. After being some time in Russia, the gallant captain surprised his friends in other parts of the world by the announcement that he had been spending part of his time on a visit in the imperial palace. In fact, the emperor, pleased with his manner, and eager, as he always is, to turn to account every opportunity of obtaining information, showed him unbounded kindness—took him to see his ships—made him dine with the empress; in a word, treated him as a brother officer

would have treated his old comrade after long separation. The English gentlemen resident in the capital, accustomed only to the stiff and killing formality with which the imperial family treat even the highest nobles about them, were struck with amazement when walking with their naval friend, to hear a grand-duke or a minister of state salute him, in passing, with a "How d'ye do?" or a "*Comment ça va ?*" with all the familiarity of ordinary mortals. In this instance the emperor did not lose his labour: the gallant captain, who, besides being a liberal in politics, had gone to St. Petersburg with even more than the usual prejudices which Englishmen entertain against Russia and its sovereign, became so complete a convert, that no young ensign whom he had personally selected for promotion could be more enthusiastic in sounding the praises of Nicholas than he has ever since been.

In fact, a desire to obtain the good opinion of England is a prominent part of the emperor's character. In this respect he resembles Napoleon, who, all the time that he was making war upon us, and abusing us through his journals, was most sensitively desirous to know what was thought and said of him in England. So anxious is Nicholas on this head, that when any discussion is coming on in the British parliament connected with Russia, he has no rest till he sees the speeches. Never was this anxiety more remarkably shown than when Lord Dudley Stuart, now nearly three years ago, announced his intention of bringing the affair of Cracow before the House of Commons, and when the attention of the house, much about the same time, was to be called to the progress of Russia

power in the East. The emperor's eagerness to know what had been said was boundless. On one or other of these occasions the government newspapers had not arrived at the regular time; but the moment it was discovered that Lord Durham had received the London journals, they were sent for with as much haste as if the fate of Russia had hung on the lips of Mr. Wakley or Mr. Attwood. The speeches, it will be recollected, were very acrimonious. A belief had for some time prevailed that the emperor was preparing for immediate war; and our merchants were complaining of insults and injuries received at his hands, or at his instigation, in the East. Under these circumstances, each successive speaker went beyond "the honourable gentleman who had just sat down" in abuse of Russia. War—nothing but instant and unrelenting war, it seemed, could wipe out the stains inflicted on the outraged dignity of England. The emperor read all this, and, as might be expected, was furious. The uncourtly plainness of English radicals is most unmeet for an emperor's ear. The threat of "war" he could forgive—if it must come to that, let the two nations even try their strength; the sooner the better: but the "abuse"—the taunts of barbarism, tyranny, slavery, and all the other terms of polite indignation—strewn as thickly through the reports of the speeches as if the printer had kept a supply of them ready set for the occasion, and thrown them in at random—these were what Nicholas could not away with. But, fortunately, Lord Durham was at hand: he knew something more of the House of Commons than his majesty could do, and put matters in their true light. The imperial wrath died

away; but with it did not die the regret felt by every friend of England in St. Petersburg, that it is now so much the fashion to speak of Russia in these irritating terms. All with whom we talked on this subject say that such diatribes do a great deal of harm. Russia is not to be conquered by the rhetoric of Billingsgate. It would be more wise to be prepared to fight her than to lull ourselves in that fancied superiority which such representations are calculated to cherish. Charges of barbarism are easily made—they cost neither much time nor much penetration; but both writers and speakers would be doing much more good to England by acquainting her with facts than by pleasing her with tropes. It is only by looking boldly at our danger—by counting the ships, the soldiers, the resources of Russia—that we can ever be prepared for the struggle which *must* come.

There can be little doubt but the rupture has been retarded by the visit of Lord Durham to the court of St. Petersburg. As travellers who would fain chronicle nothing but the truth concerning all, we must do him the justice to say that he has deserved well of England by his conduct in Russia. We are by no means among the admirers of his lordship's politics, and went to Russia much more inclined to detect subject for censure in his conduct than matter for praise. Candour, however, compels us to state, that from all we could learn he discharged his public duties with much zeal and integrity; while, in private life, his courtesy to our countrymen, individually, gained him the affections of every class of Englishmen living under the Tzar, more completely than had ever been done by any former minister. All those

who had most frequent opportunities of associating with him in Russia; agree in stating that years have wrought a salutary change both on the manners and the sentiments of the noble lord. From being petulant and supercilious, he has become kind and familiar; from being an exclusive in his bearing, and strictly tenacious of the privileges of his rank, he has become liberal and indulgent to all who approach him;—above all, from being violent and visionary, he has settled down into a calm and practical politician. That his diplomatic service has had much share in producing this change cannot be doubted: he has “seen with his own eyes” that there may be good things even in the much-libelled Russia, and by his own experience learnt that a despot can be both amiable and enlightened.

Intercourse with the emperor would seem, in fact, to be fatal to our liberal countrymen. His glance no sooner falls upon them than they become his most devoted admirers; and the same, we are afraid, must be admitted of his power over our countrymen of the opposite party,—as is well shown by the case of the noble marquis whose work on Russia has already been referred to in these pages. It is but fair to state, however, in regard to Lord Durham, that the emperor had much trouble before he could make him a good Russian. His visits to the ambassadorial villa, we have heard, were so frequent, that his lordship has sometimes been compelled to discourage them. In fact, the distinction with which he was treated by the emperor was most remarkable. Wherever he went, to the fleet or to the camp, at church and at court, Lord Durham had to be with him. It was

soon seen that, greatly to the annoyance of the other foreign ministers, literally nothing could be done without the English ambassador. Some of our countrymen, indeed, feared that his lordship had become too good a courtier, and alleged that the imperial attentions had no other aim than to flatter him into convenient security. The emperor, said they, is a clever man, a quick judge of character, and, having soon discovered his lordship's foible, was merely playing on his vanity, by those extreme marks of personal esteem. In plain terms, they hinted that Nicholas, to use a vulgar expression, was *too much* for Lord Durham, and loaded him with all these attentions merely to put him off his guard, and to enable him to carry on his own schemes undisturbed.

For our own parts, however, we found no reason to concur in these sentiments. So far as we could learn, Lord Durham did not neglect his country's interests, nor allow himself to be over reached in a single instance. The non-rejection even of exaggerated courtesies does not necessarily imply the sacrifice of any principle.

That the emperor's compliments were not all empty ones, was well shown by a case which was much talked of during our stay in the Russian capital ; and which, besides doing credit to his lordship's vigilance as the protector of his countrymen, speaks strongly for his humanity as an individual. An Englishman of the name of G——, having been wronged out of a considerable sum—160,000 roubles (6400*l.*) or thereabouts—in some transaction with government more than thirty years ago, raised an action in the courts of law, in the hope of obtaining some redress. Years passed away, however,

without bringing any prospect of a favourable termination to his suit. At last, when the whole of the tribunals through which the case had been dragging its tedious length had decided against him, he gave up all hope of ever recovering his money. This was some time before Lord Durham's arrival at St. Petersburg; but the disappointed suitor, hearing soon after that the new ambassador was very attentive to all questions brought before him, and especially to those affecting the rights or interests of even the humblest of his countrymen, took courage and submitted the case for his consideration. His lordship finding that there really was foul play in the matter, resolved, as the only likely way of obtaining justice, to lay the papers before the emperor himself. Nor had he calculated wrong in trusting to his majesty's high sense of justice; for, although it is contrary to his usual habits to revise a proceeding which has been heard before all the regular tribunals, yet, solely out of regard to Lord Durham, as he took care to state, he made himself carefully master of the whole transaction, and, in a few weeks, sent the overjoyed Englishman an order for the full payment of his claim.

Nor was it merely by procuring favours for individuals that our late ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg turned his influence with the emperor to account, for he also procured some most important favours for our merchants as a body; such as the abolition of burdensome restrictions, by which some branches of the trade with England were hampered.

But of all the services rendered by Lord Durham to his country, while acting as our minister in Russia, none

is more important than that which he conferred, by removing the misapprehension under which the emperor laboured, in regard to many points connected with England. No one can have mixed much in society abroad, without discovering that the most gross misconceptions are entertained, even by the best informed, about the state of parties, the spirit of revolution, and the tendency of recent reforms in England. They read one of Mr. O'Connell's letters to my Lord Somebody, or one of his speeches at the Corn Exchange, and instantly take it for granted that the chief of Derrynane is to be King of Ireland within a week; or at least, that France, or Russia, or the Pope, or anybody that pleases, has but to land a regiment or two in Galway Bay, and all is over with English supremacy. The Green Isle, they infer, will, without reluctance, swear allegiance to any that will have charity enough to be her new master. Sometimes it is Mr. Hume that has made a speech about flogging, or some other military question, and next day, much to his own surprise, the unwarlike orator is marching at the head of the army, proclaiming through the land that there shall be "no more kings in England."

Next time, it is Sir Robert Peel who brings about the revolution: he has opposed some measure of the government, and forthwith our clear-sighted friends behold Victoria,

"Regina di virtù et di beltà,"

setting out to conquer new hearts and new kingdoms, in some more loyal clime.

In short, our neighbours *do not understand us*. They read these things; and their newspapers—none more

actively than the salaried and *censored* government organs—are at great pains to disseminate all that appears to weaken England: they read them, and misinterpret their import, chuckling with glee at the thought that *now*, surely, our last knell has sounded. Poor, simple ones! They know as little of England, as if the Channel were an insurmountable wall of adamant, instead of an open friendly sea, which thousands of them are crossing every day to visit us, and study us, and write about us. Our “freedom of speech,” our privilege of grumbling, of being dissatisfied with every man and everything, actual or possible,—in short, all the great, essential features of English character and English institutions,—are at this moment as great mysteries to the nations of the continent, as if printing had never been invented, nor travelling thought of. They cannot imagine how the members of our different parties can oppose each other so vigorously in public, and yet never seek to cut each other’s throats; nor will they be brought to believe that, though we have many a contest among ourselves, yet, let a foreign enemy appear, and that instant all domestic quarrels are laid aside, that we may unite with one heart and one hand, to convince the world how little they know us.

Such is the ignorance regarding England that prevails on the continent; and none was more under its influence than the well-informed Emperor Nicholas. The *recent* changes in our institutions, in particular, are not yet understood, even by the few who were formerly well acquainted with England. The emperor, therefore, like many others, was fully persuaded that we were fast ad-

vancing towards revolution and anarchy; that the spirit which achieved the Reform Bill would not rest, till every vestige of what had made us great should have been swept away. Rank and property had lost their influence. Tories were never to lift their voices nor obtain power again. The principles we had acted on for a thousand years were to be abandoned; royal palace and baronial hall were alike to be laid in ruins; rapine and strife rode triumphant; "chaos was come again;" and England, so long the admiration of the world, needy, distracted, friendless, torn by factions, floating without star to cheer, or compass to guide her,—unhappy England, lay at the mercy of the first assailant who might think so mean a wreck worthy of his seizure.

But the emperor now knows better what England is. He is at length aware that the principle of destruction is not so strong nor so dangerous amongst us as he had at one time hoped. Lord Durham has opened his eyes; and he will no longer dare all he had meditated, in the belief of our disunion and helplessness. Let it not be thought, however, that Nicholas has *abandoned* his plans; he has only altered the way in which he hoped to accomplish them. He may not now seek to employ force so soon as was intended, but he will still employ cunning. He will not fight us with his fleets, as he had begun to think he might; but, wherever he has a province to annex, or an empire to subdue, he will still try to get the better of us by negotiation—by bribery—by talent.

After all, if England is really to lose her superiority—to sink to the rank of a second-rate power—as she will

virtually do when the emperor's intrigues shall have wrested from us every shadow of influence in Turkey, in Persia, in Greece, perhaps in the North of Europe itself—would it not be more honourable to have it said by the future historian, that Russia achieved all this by strength of arms—that we yielded only when *compelled* to do so—than to have it recorded that we *allowed* her to triumph by our own want of spirit, and the incapacity of our agents ?

Our St. Petersburg budget is now exhausted ; but we cannot say farewell to that marvellous city without adding, that if all the days that may be allotted to us on earth could be as profitably filled up as were those of the short month which we spent on the banks of the Neva, then would the close of life bring few regrets for opportunities wasted, and advantages unimproved. So happily had our time fled away, that we could gladly have tarried longer among the friends whose kindness gave it wings ; but, tempted by the favourable opportunity for visiting the interior of Russia which now presented itself, we once more struck our vagrant tent, and hied us to new scenes.

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INTERIOR OF RUSSIA.

EXCURSIONS,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS FOR VISITING THE INTERIOR.

The Russians seen in perfection in the interior only—Police forms before leaving—The traveller must advertise himself in the journals—Passports—Preliminary explanations—Old and new style—Mode of measuring distances—To turn versts into miles—Government Bank notes—Coins—The kopeek—The rouble—Platina coins—Account of that metal—Variations in the value of Russian notes and coins at different places.

“HE who has seen only St. Petersburg knows little of Russia, and still less of the Russians,” said a learned German, who, having spent ten years in the Emperor’s dominions, had enjoyed ample opportunity for studying the character of the nation to the utmost advantage, and consequently was well qualified to advise a foreigner on the best method he could adopt for becoming acquainted with the real condition and habits of this most interesting people.

His advice having been seconded by all our friends, with the unvarying assurance, “Unless you go to the interior you have not seen *the* Russian, but merely the

Russian of St. Petersburg," we resolved to employ the remainder of the autumn in visiting the districts lying between the Gulf of Finland and the Black Sea; and, now that our project has been accomplished, can say, in confirmation of the opinion thus expressed by our kind advisers, that in the provinces alone is the national character to be seen in perfection. At St. Petersburg the Russian, though still a savage, is a savage whose manners have been modified by contact with civilized superiors; but visit him in the lonely forest hut—find him among the pestilent swamps of the inland lake, surrounded by his pitch and his charcoal—rouse him from his night-lair among the steeds of Tartary or the herds of the Ukraine—and there will you find him unpolluted by improvement, untouched by change.

The reader, therefore, who wishes to learn what Russia and the Russians really are, will not refuse to follow us throughout the long, but not dreary, wanderings which now awaited us. Before entering on them, however, it will be necessary to premise a few words concerning the preparations which the traveller has to make when about to leave the capital.

That it is no easy matter to *enter* St. Petersburg the reader will already have seen, from the account of the Custom-house delays at Cronstadt, given in the first volume. He will now be surprised to hear—if anything can surprise him after the specimens which have been given of Russian inconsistency—that, thanks to the police formalities, it is nearly as difficult to get *out* of it again.

Every person about to leave St. Petersburg for a *foreign*

country is under the necessity of advertising his intention in the newspapers at least three different times. The professed object of this regulation is to prevent people from running away in anybody's debt ; but its real object is to give the police time to ascertain, privately, whether the traveller may have any motives of a political or treasonable nature. Owing to this arrangement, the stated time required for getting a passport ready is little short of a fortnight ; so that travellers who go to St. Petersburg on a flying visit ought to commence advertising themselves the day after they arrive. Restless Englishmen cannot *do* St. Petersburg so quickly as Naples. A learned Templar boasts of having seen the whole of the latter city during a twelve-hours' stay ; but the shortest stay a man *can* make here is at least that number of days. For a merchant or other person who has been long settled in the country, the process is much longer ; in fact, the formalities in this case are so troublesome, that he finds it difficult to get away at all. At the end of the Russian and German papers there are always long lists of the people *arrived*, *departed*, and *about to go away*. The form of the note is simply :

“ John Smith, British subject, (going) to Lübeck, may be found in the Galernoy Oulitza, No. 10, in the house of Madame Moreau.”

The lists of these notices frequently fill a column or two of the paper.

Those starting from St. Petersburg for the interior, *in the intention of leaving Russia without returning to the capital*, as in our case, have also to perform this ceremony of advertising themselves, but have it in their

power to do so either before leaving St. Petersburg, or at the place of embarkation, as may be found most convenient. Being anxious to get away as quickly as possible, we started without advertising; but we should advise all travellers, whether embarking from that port or not, to go through the whole ceremony at St. Petersburg, in which the process of advertising is more expeditiously accomplished than at a distant sea-port—where, as newspapers appear in such a place only once a-week, a foreigner has to wait a long time, unless he has private friends who will become security for all debts and claims which may be brought against him after his departure.

The only protection which we took with us was a passport for the interior. We should advise English travellers, however, who intend visiting other foreign countries after leaving Russia, in place of asking for this Russian document, to get back their original passport, countersigned by the Minister of the Interior—who, as we discovered too late, is quite willing to give it up when applied for in time. They will thus not only get on fully as well throughout Russia, but save themselves the trouble of providing a new passport on reaching another kingdom. As in other countries, most of these police matters are managed by the people of the hotel in which he lives, without giving the stranger much trouble.

Including advertisements, the expense of passports comes to be much greater in Russia than in any other country. But, however troublesome these matters, previous to starting, may be, the traveller will meet with less trouble in the interior than in the other countries of Europe. In some parts of Italy his carriage is stopped

three or four times a-day to have his passports or luggage inspected ; but he may traverse Russia from side to side, and from end to end, without having luggage touched so much as once ; and, unless at Moscow and one or two of the principal towns, even passports are never asked for.

An explanation of the *padoroshna*, and of the posting system and expenses, will be given in the account of our journey from Moscow, when we first were under the necessity of making ourselves acquainted with these topics. Meantime, in order to render the following pages intelligible, it will be necessary to say a few words on Russian dates, distances, and money.

In regard to the first of these it may be stated, that the stranger, on arriving here, is sadly annoyed by them, in consequence of the Russians still retaining the *old* style. But, in order to find *our* day of the month from *theirs*, he has only to add TWELVE to the given date ; thus their 19th of July corresponds to our 31st ; their 1st of April to the 13th of ours. The reduction of Russian to English *distances* is equally simple. There being about three versts to two English miles, the shortest way is to divide the number of versts by three, and deducting the third from the whole, the remainder is the number of miles English : thus eighteen versts make twelve of our miles.

Money is not always so easily dealt with. On the whole, however, the rouble piece, being in size and value exactly the same as the French franc piece (10*d.* English), we found it the best way, for large as well as small sums, to reckon twenty-five roubles to the pound sterling.

We did not get that number of roubles for every pound from the bankers, the exchange at the time being unfavourable; but for all general purposes the ratio now stated is sufficiently accurate. Dividing any number of roubles, therefore, by twenty-five gives the sum pretty nearly in pounds sterling: thus, seventy-five roubles divided by twenty-five make three pounds.

The kopeek is a thin copper coin, twice as large as our farthing, but not so valuable, ten of them being required to make the value of a penny English; consequently, one hundred make a rouble, or tenpence. There are handsome copper coins of ten kopeeks; that is, of the same value as a penny, but much larger. There are old five-kopeek or halfpenny pieces, not now in circulation, as large as twopence of our copper. Formerly, indeed, the whole of the Russian copper money was so very large in proportion to the value of copper in other countries, that it became a regular trade to export it for sale in England and elsewhere; but the new coinage is of a size which leaves no temptation to the exporter.

Silver coins, of many different values, are in circulation; such as pieces of five roubles, one rouble forty kopeeks, one rouble sixty kopeeks, and two roubles, &c. These require no particular explanation.

The gold coins are remarkably handsome, but are not in very general circulation.

There are also platina coins for as many roubles as would make several pounds sterling; but though this metal be more rare even than gold, it does not appear to be in great favour as a substitute for the better known metals. As some readers may not be acquainted with

this metal, which is now often heard of in connexion with Russia, it may be stated, that platina is comparatively a *new* metal, having been made known to Europe only about the year 1749, when Mr. Ward, assay-master in Jamaica, first published an account of its properties. For many years it was found only in South America and St. Domingo, and then only in the smallest quantities. Lately, however, it has been found in what may be considered large quantities, in various parts of Asiatic Russia, especially in the mountains of the Ural, where 1 pood 33 pounds were dug in 1824. In 1830 not fewer than 303 poods 14 pounds were collected. A lump is shown in St. Petersburg from the mines of the Demidoff family, weighing more than twenty pounds. In its pure state this metal is not unlike silver, only darker, and with less lustre. In beauty, ductility, indestructibility, and especially weight, it comes so near gold, that, when first introduced to Europe, a law was passed in Spain prohibiting its importation, for fear that it might be employed in adulterating gold. "This," say the chemists, "was quite unnecessary, for the addition of about one-fortieth impairs its properties so much, that it is easily detected." It is greatly employed in lining retorts and other vessels used by chemists.

On reaching Moscow we found Spanish dollars (the *colonnati* of the Mediterranean) and other foreign pieces in constant circulation. The great bulk of the circulating medium of Russia, however, is in *paper*. The notes are of five, ten, fifty, roubles, and are all of the same size, but are blue, vermillion, or white, according to their value. Even the notes of smallest value (4s. 2d. Eng-

lish) are nearly as large as a ten-pound Bank of England one ; but the paper being of a peculiarly soft and clammy texture, the Russian notes lie in little room and look very neat.

The emperor has an excellent bargain of these same notes. They are nominally payable on demand ; but as *copper* is the standard coin of the empire, nobody would be rash enough to ask for payment. It would take a wain or two to carry home a hundred pounds sterling : the government paper is thus virtually irredeemable. In fact, so high does it stand in public favour, that on reaching Moscow we found our notes worth seventeen per cent. more than in St. Petersburg. This arises from a defective system of banking, or rather from the doubtful state of private credit. There being no banks, as in other countries, and little confidence among merchants, it becomes necessary for a trader at Moscow or any part of the provinces, who has a payment to make in the capital, to *buy government paper* to the amount of his intended remittance, there being no other medium through which remittances can be made. This operation naturally makes bank-notes in these places be always at a premium, varying according to the amount of payments due at the time.

The traveller gains in the same proportion on all *silver* brought from the capital. The only coin we found at a discount is a very handsome new one, nominally worth something more than two roubles, but which, in some remote parts, after leaving Moscow, is under that value, and occasionally will scarcely be taken at all. The premium varies so rapidly, that, on entering a shop

at Moscow, you never know how far your roubles are to go. As a general rule, however, the gain is so considerable, that travellers going to the interior may always take cash with them from the capital for their whole journey, with the certainty of gaining by it. At Odessa, where business relations with the capital are of a different nature, money resumes its original value.

CHAPTER II.

FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO NOVGOROD-VELIKI.

General character of Russian scenery—Tame when compared with that of other countries—Our party—Companions—Our mode of travelling.—Russian diligence—The most comfortable in the world—Splendid road—Care with which it is kept—Crops—Mode of farming—Barns—Herds—Hamlets—Houses—Village scenes—Appearance of the people—Post-houses—Crowds asleep at night in the open air—Horses—Postilions—Military Colony—Novgorod Veliki—Its decayed state.

RUSSIA is the largest and the ugliest country in the world. Nature seems to have lavished all her deformity on this one empire, which, without question, covers the least beautiful portion of the whole habitable globe. With the exception of the Crimea, the Russian Italy—and even of it many speak in terms of very moderate praise—there is scarcely a single inch of this overgrown territory that can be called picturesque.

It has been deemed necessary to make this statement before commencing our wanderings, in order to keep the reader from being alarmed lest we should be pausing at every step with endless descriptions of scenery—heaping epithets upon epithets, and figure upon figure, in the hope of conveying some idea of its beauties. The writer on Russia is not in the smallest danger of offending in this respect. It is not as in Norway or Sweden, where the traveller is constantly falling in with something that

would keep him prating for hours. In Russia, it is possible to travel five hundred miles without being once arrested by a romantic scene. He who journeys over it cannot indeed say "It is all barren;" for he passes many an interesting sight: but assuredly he will not find a single beautiful mountain, nor a rugged cliff, nor a brawling stream, nor a fresh green glen, to detain him. He finds nothing but the dead, wearisome, ceaseless monotony of tame plains and tamer forests.

Yet, if Russia possess little beauty in point of scenery, in one respect it surprises the stranger most completely. He comes expecting to find large portions of it entirely desert; and, doubtless, there are many in this state: but the lines through which the great roads lie are generally so well cultivated, that, with the exception of the Steppes, Russia will by no means be found such a wilderness as we usually conceive it to be. There are few "moors," or waste places, to be seen: all the ground not under the plough is covered with wood.

During our journeyings through the interior, our party consisted of four Englishmen, the original party of two having been agreeably doubled by the accession of two countrymen, father and son,—the one full of information, from his experience both as a soldier and a politician; the other fresh from Oxford, and possessed of every amiable quality required for the composition of that most rare character—a good travelling companion. Our expedition, as far as Moscow, was performed in the "Diligence," the Russian substitute for a stage-coach. In general appearance this vehicle has a great resemblance to its French namesake, but is much more com-

fortable. The horses, usually four in number, are yoked abreast. The open cabriolet in front being large enough only for the "conducteur" and a couple of passengers, the yemtchik (postillion) takes his seat on a lower box. The hind-part of the body of the machine is occupied by a covered bench, closed in with leather cushions, for three persons, who are far from comfortably lodged. The body is divided into two compartments, for two persons each: in these the arrangement is superior to anything we have seen, each passenger having a portion fenced off for himself, where he sits as in an arm-chair, conversing with the neighbour at his elbow, but never interfering with his comforts. Each has a small looking-glass before him, by way of securing for every one a sight of the face which he is most in love with. Before one of these little glasses, a Russian who travelled with us was constantly trimming his long beard. There is also a small folding table in front of each person—very useful in a country where the natives invariably lay in stores for a journey, that they may be independent of taverns by the way. Their meals of sausage and bread are all eaten from this small table while the horses move on. Foreigners, of course, do not think of providing a stock, and consequently come poorly off at times. We had no reason to complain: though not at all the post-houses, yet there are many, which may be easily found out beforehand, where tolerable fare can be had. In these cases, however, it is dangerous to trust to servants. The master, or, if there be two or three of a party, one of the masters, must himself visit the kitchen, and show that he is in earnest, else little will be forthcoming.

From this account of the diligence it will be seen that Russia is making progress as well as her neighbours. Not many years ago, no kind of public conveyance was known in the country ; but now this line of road is contested by rival companies. The traveller may find a most excellent conveyance nearly every day in summer. In fact, although we never expected to have such a confession to make, the most comfortable public conveyances in Europe are those of Russia. We have tried all the public vehicles, by whatever name they may be called, from Naples to Stockholm, and decidedly the only one at all convenient is that now spoken of. How superior it is to a barbarous French *intérieur*, or even an English inside, thus to sit alone and independent, yet not unsocial—for besides the neighbour at your elbow, you have only to turn up the cushion running across, and carry on a talk with the other two—will easily be conceived by those who have endured all the horrors of a six-inside machine for two or three hundred miles—from Geneva to Paris, for instance.

The fare is also very moderate ; including the charge for postillions, it is below four pounds for a journey of 648 versts, or 466 miles. The cabriolet, which is still cheaper, is by far the best seat for seeing the country : here some of us were always seated, the weather (in August) having been so mild, that even at night we did not feel the slightest inconvenience. The horses being generally supplied by the peasants at the different stages, and not by the regular postmasters, there are often long delays in procuring them ; but, on the whole, the speed is superior to that of French travelling.

The road throughout the whole distance to Moscow is, without exception, one of the finest in the world. It has been opened only within a few years. It is very broad, with sloping gutters from the edge of the middle part to the ditch on each side. For a considerable distance, a row of trees has been planted on either hand. The Emperor has a pride in keeping it as neat as a garden walk; and for this purpose has erected, at the end of every seven or eight versts (about five miles English), a range of very handsome wooden buildings, a few yards back from the road, for an inspecting corporal and party of soldiers, who have nothing to do but to keep their portion of the road in repair. Being painted of a yellow colour, and surrounded with a smart fence and neat garden, which, as well as the gravelled court, is dressed with military precision, these houses are great ornaments to the country. In front of each, within the stockade, are posted a couple of iron ploughs, flanked by heavy rollers, in place of a battery. Stones being scarce in most districts, the spaces where bridges *ought* to be on this road are left unoccupied; a wooden substitute, very substantial, is built close beside each vacant gap: so that, in all, there are several hundred wooden bridges to cross in the course of the journey. Smart stone pillars mark the distances. Though sometimes sufficiently tiresome, the road does not delight so much in straight lines as a French highway does. Wherever it runs through a forest—and a great part of the first day's journey is of that description—the trees are cleared away near a hundred yards on each side; an arrangement which not only helps to keep the road dry, by allowing a free circu-

lation of air, but also affords pasture for the numerous herds of cattle constantly passing to the capital.

This magnificent road, worthy of the Romans themselves, contrasts amazingly with the old one, known as that of Peter the Great, remnants of which may still be seen in many places, running parallel with the present line. It was made of round trees, laid from side to side, corduroy-fashion. What a punishment it must have been to have been jolted five or six days on such a merciless track!

At first the crops were scanty and late, and nothing but rye to be seen. It is needless to state, that wheat cannot be raised for a great distance round St. Petersburg; and that even oats and barley are far from common. In fact, all kinds of grain are extremely precarious; the night-frosts of autumn, or rather of *our* summer, often leave scarce one sound ear for the reaper. In some of these districts *three* returns, and even *two*, are thought a good crop. Hemp and flax, however, grow remarkably well. The grain crops are divided into those of winter and summer. The former are the better of the two, and consist chiefly of rye; "the culture of which," says an author who seems to have studied the subject, "differs little from that of wheat in Britain. It is sown in autumn, after summer fallow. The winter snow protects it from the severity of the frosts. The summer is short, and when attended, which it generally is, with heavy rains, the harvest is retarded. The oats and barley are then *cut green*, and dried in their barns with stoves. The rye, under the same circumstances, is treated in the same manner. The process is very simple: the grain, with its straw, is placed upon rafters in the

barn, and a stove heated beneath them. A few hours only are necessary to dry the grain in so hot an oven, and a new quantity is brought till the whole crop is dried."

In the first day's journey little corn-land is seen. Frequent herds of beautiful white cattle, feeding among the rank grass between the road and the wood, begin to appear soon after leaving the gates of the city. Compared with those of Scandinavia, the trees look like low brushwood: hence the forests are not at all imposing.

On this road, and indeed throughout the whole of Russia, a house is almost never seen standing by itself: the peasants are all congregated in small villages, containing from thirty to one hundred houses, ranged in a line on each side the highway. It is in these places that the Russian is found in unsophisticated purity. Flatterers may prate as they please about the progress Russia is making: the *Russian*, whatever his country has been doing, remains exactly where Peter found him. That royal reformer gave him a push forward, after his rude fashion, but the moment its influence ceased to be felt, the good Russian came to a stand-still, and there you may see him at this hour, in his skins and his shoes of bark, standing by the door of his filthy dwelling, every thing precisely the same as early authors describe.

This dwelling of his is worth noticing. Between the road and the houses is a space of seven or eight yards, one unbroken splash of impassable mud. The *end* of all the houses is turned to the passer-by—a high-peaked concern, with boards fantastically carved descending nearly to the ground along the two sides of the triangu-

lar roof, which is generally of thin deals, but sometimes of straw or reeds. One corner of this gable is usually occupied by a door, and the upper portion of it displays at least six or eight small windows, with folding shutters to each, gaudily painted. Every house has a bench, sheltered by the projecting roof, where young and old sit to sun themselves on holidays. Sometimes the door is not seen from the road, being in the side of the house, and reached only through the fenced court-yard. Scarcely a cottage is without its large draw-well, with wheel and rope, before it: in some hamlets these wells are ridiculously numerous.

Altogether there is much more ornament about the houses than on those of the same rank in Sweden; but no paint being employed except on the shutters, they have always a dingy, decaying look. There is no want of comfort, however; that is, of Russian comfort, of which cleanliness makes no part. The houses do not stand side by side—each reigns in a domain of its own, a court-yard, namely, of considerable size; to fence which a high boarded wall runs on either side the gable: in this wall are a couple of lofty gateways, right and left of the house, opening into the vast mud-covered area, round which stand sheds supported by an open range of wooden pillars in front, but boarded close at the back. The stranger is surprised at the great extent of out-buildings of this nature seen in a Russian court-yard: a very small place will have as great an extent of out-house shelter as a pretty large farm in England. Their dreadful climate accounts for this. They can leave nothing in the fields in winter. Every thing must be housed ere the snow appears.

Unless on holidays, few people, young or old, are to be seen about the doors, in such hamlets as that now described. Even about the post-houses there is little life. These establishments are nearly all like the houses now described, only that the court-yard is much larger and more muddy, owing to the long trains of waggons and draught-oxen which they harbour, on their way to St. Petersburg. After night-fall, about the doors of such places, or heaped together in the lobbies, we always found crowds of men sleeping most profoundly. At first, being unprepared for such obstructions, we often stumbled over them on our way to negotiate for coffee in the kitchen, which is sometimes upstairs, and sometimes far away at the end of some mysterious passage. Among these sleepers we remarked that those who have a cloth coat—such a blue robe or caftan as has already been described—always pull their arms out of the sleeves, and, rolling it about their head and shoulders, make it serve for a blanket. The hard step of the door is their only pillow. For a time we fancied that they must be drunk, but soon learned that it is the general fashion for carters and servants of every description, when travelling, to pass the night in this way.

We seldom stopped in the daytime without having some beggars about us. As already stated, benevolence to the distressed is very strong in every Russian; even the poorest *moozik*, though he has but half-a-dozen kopeeks in the world, will give some of them to the beggar. The consequence is that foreigners who decline giving at the different stages are regarded as very brutal, and the disappointed applicants look less than civil.

Sometimes the distance between the post-houses is

very great. The same horses frequently took us thirty-three versts; and even thirty-five (about twenty-four miles) were not uncommon. Yet they were kept in spirits and good-humour all the time by their friend the yemtchik. A Russian postillion is one of the most singular creatures we have ever encountered. In his greasy sheepskin, faded sash, and low round hat, with clear buckles on it, or a few peacock's feathers twisted in the band, off he flies the moment he mounts his block, at the rate of eight miles an hour, whistling, singing, shouting, and making love to his horses, raising as much noise as an Irishman in a fair; his whip, like Paddy's shillelah, flourishing fierce round his head, but seldom coming down with the same violence. In fact, it is by his tongue, more than his whip, that he impels his horses. He speaks to them, reasons with them, remonstrates, conjures, upbraids, all the time. If you tell him that your head is sore with his noise, he shrugs his shoulders, raises his eyebrows, and gives you to understand that his pigeons, his rabbits, his darlings, his turtle-doves, are so fond of talk, and so well accustomed to his voice, that they would never move if he were silent. Some of his speeches, as interpreted to us, are not of the most delicate nature; "but," says he, "it affronts them, and does not hurt half so much as a lash of the whip." There is so little variety in the Russian face and dress that we scarcely knew when we had changed one of these noisy gentlemen for another. They are all about the same size too. We at last got into the way of distinguishing them by the patches on the back, which are much more varied than their lovely faces.

The second morning brought us near some of the emperor's MILITARY COLONIES. The neat, well-kept cottages, as stiff and formal as a regiment on a review ground, have a very different appearance from the widely-ranged houses of the ordinary villages. Whether there is much wisdom in thus dividing the population into two distinct classes, each with feelings, habits, and training totally distinct from those of the other, is a question which may easily be decided, without pretending to the gift of prophecy.

NOVGOROD-VELIKI, that is, the "Great," stands about twenty-four hours' journey (121 miles) on our way. It is well known that in the days of its commercial prosperity this city was so splendid that the proverb said, "There is nothing great but God and Novgorod;" but now it is so sadly fallen that it could scarcely furnish us with a breakfast of good bread and bad butter. The large creaking inn with difficulty afforded even a basin and *one* towel among four of us. Its 100,000 inhabitants have dwindled to less than 10,000. But it is still a very showy, interesting place, with its time-worn kremlin, wide, well-paved streets, St. Petersburg houses, and, above all, a most romantic history. Bells were tinkling softly on every hand from the minarets,—their eastern aspect will scarcely allow us to call them "steeple," though in a Christian country,—and recalled the days when they summoned the citizens to battle against the Russians in defence of their republican independence. There is a fine wooden bridge, founded on granite pillars, built across the Volkhoff, the river which drains Lake Ilmen.

CHAPTER III.

FROM NOVGOROD-VELIKI TO MOSCOW.

Krastzé—Country fare and country beauties—**Vishni Voloshok**—Great Canal of Russia—Village churches—Scenes by the road-side—Waggon—Telegas—Safety of travellers in Russia—*Torjok*—The City of Cutlets—**TVER**—State of Education in the Northern Governments—Russian forests—Vast extent—Process of making tar—Pitch—Russians have no love of trees like the Turks or Germans—"Luther's Linden," a reminiscence of Germany—People sweeping the roads—Burnt village—*Klin*.

ABOUT eighteen miles after leaving the once proud, but now humbled Novgorod, the Msta is crossed on a floating bridge, at the small town of Bronnitzky, near which several of the most important military colonies are established.

The country now became more pleasant. Houses, large and showy, are very frequent by the way-sides; and both crops and culture are far superior to those of our first four hundred miles from St. Petersburg.

The women were selling strawberries in the villages, and at *Krastzé*, a small district town, forty-two miles from Novgorod, bilberries were brought us in great abundance. The people here were assembled round the post-house, all in holiday attire. We had already seen some men displaying unusual symptoms of gaiety in their dress, and especially with a kind of yellow cap, amazingly fine. Now the women attracted our notice by their gaudy dress; but they were horrible creatures,

with their breasts hanging down so far on their bellies that they had a most disgusting appearance. The fashion of Norway, in some parts of which the women press their breasts up to the chin, is not so disgusting. Fortunately, however, people's notions of beauty differ very widely; for one damsel, whom we should have thought quite deformed, was receiving most ardent attention from a youth on the inn steps, before all the world. The gala dress of the female, both in this and some of the adjoining parts of the country, has the merit of being showy enough. The most conspicuous portion of it was a loose jacket of sky-blue silk, reaching below the waist, lined with white fur; the arms of this garment, lined with rich spotted fur, hang loose from the shoulder.

The crowd amused us greatly while our hostess was preparing a dinner of pork *à la mayonnaise*, and *two* soups, to be mixed with each other, one of sorrel, the other some yellow mystery, with lumps of beef and veal floating through them. No man in ordinary health should ever take his cook with him in travelling: he who does so loses half the pleasure of travel. The mirth occasioned by a haphazard trust to the outlandish cookery of a foreign country is better than the best things that a Frenchman can concoct.

Dinner in these places generally costs about 4s. each person, including a share of a bottle of tolerable Medoc or St. Julien. When wine failed, there was always sure to be abundance of their beloved vodki, or brandy, and sometimes Russian gin, with rivers of kvass. Breakfast is a poor meal at such places—nothing but tea and good bread, with something called butter; for all of which

they charge 1s. 8d., and more when coffee is demanded. Except in Moscow and St. Petersburg, there are few parts of Russia where butter can be got. In the south, they make a rancid poisonous stuff called butter, but it is scarcely eatable: it is for export to Turkey alone: butter is never used by the natives themselves.

At *Vishni-Voloshok*, a district town of the government of Tver, 198 miles from St. Petersburg, we had an opportunity of examining, more minutely than at any former place, part of the great canal, by means of which the waters of the Baltic are united to those of the Caspian. Nothing can be more beautiful nor more solid than everything connected with this magnificent undertaking, which, uniting the Volga and the Neva, together with some intermediate rivers of less importance, completes a line of inland navigation 1,200 miles long—the most extensive ever known. The most substantial and ingenious contrivances have been adopted for surmounting all the difficulties. The town boasts of four thousand inhabitants; but it is a scattered, comfortless place. It has a bazaar, and fine walks along the Tsna. At least four thousand large barks pass here annually for St. Petersburg, where they are broken up, the nature of part of the river navigation rendering it impossible to bring them back.

While horses were changing, we often had time to walk on several miles before the coach overtook us. We thus had opportunity to survey some of the villages, which still continued as wretched as in the early part of our journey, only that here each boasts of a more conspicuous church. This is generally too fine for the locality.

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A showy Grecian portico, with white-washed stuccoed pillars, fifty feet high, looks sadly out of place, towering over a cluster of miserable black huts.

The road was now often covered with hundreds of waggons, bound for the capital, all loaded with goods manufactured in the interior. Some are from Toulâ, a journey of 582 miles. Few private vehicles are met. The favourite conveyance of the country seems to be the *telega*, a low, wide, boat-like concern, with an oiled canvass top, where the traveller may sit or lie, as he feels inclined. His position is as comfortable as can be expected in a vehicle without springs. Large bands of peasants, travelling on foot, now frequently passed us on their way northward. The raven and hooded crow are very frequent company by the road-side, and the jackdaw may be seen in large flights, living most familiarly with the villagers. The circumstance of our being on foot seemed to excite less surprise among the people we passed, than it would have done in Sweden and Norway. Travelling on foot, however, is very rare here, with all above the lowest class. Some have said that it is dangerous to travel alone in Russia; but this is contrary to what we heard from gentlemen who have been long in the country: they assure us that a foreigner may travel all over the empire alone, and even on foot, without danger, the poorest being ready not only to share his morsel with him, but to assist and protect him. These gentlemen admit, however, that it is not equally safe for a stranger who makes a show of money, or is suspected of having it, to travel alone: he runs a great chance of having his throat cut.

The country, which has hitherto been almost an unbroken plain, begins to undulate a little before entering *Torjok*, 316. miles from the capital. This town, containing about 10,000 inhabitants, and the second in importance in the government of Tver, is one of the few in Russia which can be described as being rather prettily situated. The houses are grouped on a broken height, interspersed with trees, giving them in the sunset a warmer and more romantic look than is usual in this unromantic land. The town is very old, and seems to be declining. Its inn, the only good one on the road, is famed all over Russia for its cutlets, made of fowl; and we found them in every way worthy of their reputation. Cherries were brought us as a rarity. Here it is customary to buy morocco boots, &c., for which the place is famous; but the very articles manufactured here may be bought much cheaper, both in the capital and at Moscow.

At *Tver*, 358 miles from St. Petersburg, the capital of the extensive government to which it gives its name, we crossed the largest of European rivers, the winding Volga, which we hope to see again at a more interesting part of its long career. This town, as a place of residence, is one of the most agreeable in Russia. Its twenty thousand inhabitants are nearly all supported by the active and valuable commerce carried on by means of the Volga.

It gives a striking idea of the deficient state of education in the country parts of Russia, to find, from the statistical returns quoted by Schnitzler, that, so late as 1826, among twenty-three schools in the government of

Tver, at which both sexes were admitted, there was not a single girl attending. Of late, the returns make mention of some female scholars; but that education is not advancing very rapidly with either sex appears but too strongly, even by the latest returns, which, for the whole government, give fifty schools of every kind, attended by 4132 scholars—or only one to every 314 inhabitants.

In both of the governments which we have been traversing, Novgorod and Tver, the proportion of arable land to that covered by forests is so inconsiderable, that these extensive regions may literally be said to be still covered with wood. The forest of Volkonsky, which partly lies in Tver, is the largest in Europe. From merely travelling by the high road, the stranger would scarcely suspect that there is so much of these northern governments uncultivated. He finds a deceitful slip of corn-land, within sight, nearly all the way from the gates of St. Petersburg, and forthwith sets the provinces down as generally well cultivated. The flatness of the country helps this delusion. One never reaches any elevation from which the eye can take in a large sweep at one moment. But the boundless extent of wood with which Russia is covered may be inferred, from the condition of one government alone, in which, on 50,000,000 of acres, its whole extent, 47,000,000 consist exclusively of forests.* According to an estimate made in 1809, which refers only to the north of Russia, these forests appeared to contain no fewer than 8,192,295 pines fit to be masts, each being at least thirty inches diameter. The accu-

* These and many other curious facts will be found in the eighth volume of the *Transactions of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg*.

racy of this estimate has now been amply confirmed by *actual survey*, in the course of which it has been ascertained that in the three northern governments of Vologda, Archangel, and Olonetz, there are 216,000,000 acres of pine and fir. In the centre of Russia oak grows well, together with the Russian maple, white poplar, and hornbeam. From the fifty-first to the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, birch, aspen, and lime are abundant. Instead of being favourable to game, these thickets often harbour nothing but vermin. The elk and the bison are sometimes found ; but wolves, bears, foxes, and badgers are their most numerous tenants.

These forests, even where they cannot be turned to account as timber, are of great value to the proprietors, were it only for the *tar* procured from them. This, as is well known, is one of the most important articles of Russian trade. The way of making it is extremely simple, being precisely the same as that pursued in Sweden and Norway ; and, what is very singular, it would also appear to be the method described by Dioscorides and other ancient authors, as having been followed by the Greeks in making this article. Those who have seen charcoal made will easily understand the process. Generally the *best* tar is made where the *worst* fir grows ; that is, in a marshy situation, which is not so favourable to the growth of the tree as a dryer soil. In such a place, however, the *roots*, from which tar is chiefly procured, are found to be most productive. In a moist forest-district, therefore, on the side of a bank, a pit is dug, of the shape of a funnel, tapering towards the bottom, in which an iron pan is placed, furnished with a

tube, communicating with a barrel outside. This pit is filled with the healthiest pine-roots, bundled up with the most resinous portions of the tree ; on the top large quantities of charcoal are heaped, and the whole driven hard together by heavy mallets. Over all a close covering of turf is laid, and finally fire is set to the mass, which consumes, without blazing, by a slow combustion, in the course of which the tar, distilled *per descensum*, falls into the pan at the bottom, and thence by the tube into the barrel, which conveys it to the market. *Pitch*, also, brought in large quantities from Russia, is tar in another shape, being made by *inspissating* or boiling it down to dryness.

Neither in the part of the country we are now traversing, nor elsewhere in Russia, have we ever seen among the people any symptom of that love for trees which characterizes many of the continental nations, and especially their neighbours, the Turks and Germans. In every Turkish village, by the mosque or shading the fountain, there are trees the growth of centuries—some of them the most beautiful in the world—regarded by the whole community with something of religious love. The ample boughs of the familiar plane-tree shade the young maiden, when she seeks the spring and pauses a stolen moment to hear the venerable mullah, in converse with the patriarchs of the hamlet, utter maxims of wisdom, from his seat of daily resort. The wayworn pilgrim seeks shelter and repose beneath its wonted shade : the wearied steed, too, rejoices in its protection, while his master reposes from the noonday sun. Both man and beast would mourn the decay of a single bough.

In Germany again—to whose humble but interesting tale-adorned villages these dreary Russian places carry the wanderer back with redoubled affection—in Germany, no hamlet is without its alley of lime-trees, where the Sabbath crowd assembles till the good pastor mingles with them on his way to church. The *dorflinden*—his “village-lime”—calls up a thousand dear associations in the German’s breast. Some places have a linden-tree so old and so beautiful, that the inhabitants are prouder of it than of a charter from Charlemagne. The history of the aged tree is often the history of the place. Could these boughs speak, how many stirring tales could they tell—tales of village sorrows and of village joys—of fathers met to take despairing counsel together in the terrible days of Wallenstein—of whispered vows, too, from faithful hearts when happier days came back. Others are dear to the community from associations of a yet higher character. We shall mention only one—the remembrance will lighten the heaviness of these storyless Russian wilds.

In the town of Trewenbritzen, between Wittemberg and Potsdam, stands one of the finest lime-trees of Germany, endeared to the people by a circumstance of the noblest kind. Time and war have shorn it of many a goodly arm, and the stately trunk, hollowed by years, presents but the shell of what it has been ; but its head still flourishes green and fair, while the remaining branches, as if emulous to atone for the loss of their brethren, are each year spreading wider and wider abroad.

“Look well at our linden,” said the good schoolmaster

before whose garden it stands: "you will wander far before you see such a noble one, and there is none that can boast of being consecrated by such a scene as it once witnessed. The greatest blessing ever conferred on our town was received under its shade! IT WAS BENEATH THIS TREE THAT LUTHER FIRST PREACHED TO US. The church, which, though now enlarged, still looks as if creeping under it for shelter, was then too small for the eager crowd. Young and old had flocked to hear the eloquent man, whose name was already beginning to echo so wondrously in every corner of our wide fatherland. So many came, that half of them could not be contained within the church. They at last entreated him to give them all an opportunity of hearing, by taking his station beneath the tree, even at that time large enough to shelter so great a throng. That was truly a memorable day in the history of our town, when thousands stood where we now stand, listening for the first time to the life-giving, and no longer darkened, truths of the Gospel. A proud day, too, in the history of our tree; for from that hour to this it has been known as LUTHER'S LINDEN; and there is not a heart in Trewenbritzen that does not thank God each year when its leaves return again. We would sooner part with our meadows than our tree."

How few cathedrals can tell such a history as this honoured tree! As we looked up through the strong boughs crossing and arching themselves above us, we thought the tracery of its verdant roof more rich than ever was hewn by Gothic chisel. The tree must now be some four hundred years old.

In Russia, however, no traditions of this kind interrupt the traveller by the way. Neither here, where large hardwood trees are scarce, nor farther south, where they acquire a great size, did we ever see a single row of trees in the village green, nor even a solitary elm to serve as a place of rendezvous in the summer eve.

Yet, after passing Tver, the country improves a little and becomes more interesting. In a land where there are no hills, a few knolls, which now come in sight, tell for much. The fields, too, are now under higher cultivation.

The people also change, but not greatly for the better, unless red beards, in place of sandy ones, be an improvement. In the villages, men, women and children were busy picking away the grass on the road before their houses: the emperor was expected to pass, and no slovenliness must meet his eye. The soldiers of the road; stations were also busy at the same work. Some of them were actually engaged in the ignoble task of *sweeping* the sides. This is keeping roads *clean* with a vengeance.

The peasants in general appear to be in good circumstances. We were always struck with the look of abundance—some would say comfort—both about the people and their cottages. Every man seems to be well lodged, and to have plenty of food, fuel, and clothing. Their houses, however, are as filthy as their persons. Some of the crown-serfs who were liberated in these districts, not knowing what to do for a protector when difficulties arose, have placed themselves under the superiority of the neighbouring noblemen. Such cases need not surprise us:—those who never knew liberty cannot learn all the duties

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CHAPTER IV.

MOSCOW AND ITS KREMLIN.

Splendid sunset view—Beautiful situation—Its sad condition during the visit of the French—No traces remaining of the great fire—The KREMLIN—Its fantastic architecture—Summer evening on its terrace and in the gardens—Singular religious ceremony—The Blessing of the Waters—The Metropolitan—Cathedral and churches of the Kremlin—Its palaces—The Emperor's private palace—His bridal days—Portraits of the Empress—Her popularity—The Treasury—Valuable jewels, crowns, curiosities, &c.—The great bell of Moscow—Its disinterment—Tower of Ivan Veliki—Moscow preferable to St. Petersburg—Abounds with objects of interest—Markets—Bazaars—Large roof.

THOSE who have first seen Moscow under a beautiful sunset, as we did, will not soon forget the sensations of that moment. It is certainly one of the most beautiful sights in the world. We do not recollect any city which makes so fine a show at a distance, and disappoints less when entered. Full eight miles away its countless towers and cupolas were gleaming bright in the sun. Not a single cloud hung over it. The sky, and the glitter of the buildings, were both Italian, as well as the fresh gardens and tufts of verdure which lay round many of the houses, and heightened their brightness. It would be impossible to describe the feelings which rose as we advanced. It was the realization of some fairy tale; for each moment brought new domes, of blue, and gold, and white, into view. We could scarcely persuade ourselves

that we were not in Asia,—so truly oriental is the aspect of this glittering city.

The fair Moscow, in circuit not less than thirty miles, and sheltering 300,000 inhabitants, now lay as it were at our feet—not in one thick mass of impenetrable buildings, but spread with exactly that degree of open and orderly confusion which taste prefers to straight lines and sharp angles—over a finely undulating hollow, embosomed among a circle of broken heights, some fringed with wood, some green with cultivation, which at once give protection and beauty to the stately city. Distinct and beautiful in the midst of all, rises the hundred-crested Kremlin.

What most surprises in the view of Moscow, is the freshness with which everything smiles to the eye. We had thought of it as a wretched assemblage of mud hovels and wooden palaces; but the buildings are as solid as they are splendid. On coming nearer, the gaudy villas of the nobility, the Chinese-looking summer palace, the broad promenades, the glittering equipages crowded on the race-course, the well-clad guards, gave it all the pomp and *éclat* of a capital.

We enter by a noble triumphal arch, resembling bronze, to the memory of Alexander, as restorer of the city reduced to ashes at the time the French were here.

All allow that Moscow has arisen from its ashes in greater splendour than ever. It would seem to have suffered on that occasion only to make way for more regular and more tasteful structures, many of which are so new, that Moscow, in some places, outshines even the bright-

ness of St. Petersburg. The efforts made to repair the ravages are beyond all praise. The Russians were always proud of Moscow, and the association of its destruction with the overthrow of a hated invader made them still more proud of it. Every one bearing the name of Russian, from the emperor to the lowest peasant, felt honoured in contributing to the patriotic work of its restoration; and in consequence of this patriotic unanimity, though it be not yet much more than twenty years since the French were here, yet scarcely a single trace of their visit is now to be found, except in the splendours just spoken of. Fortunately, Napoleon did not succeed in one of the most wanton and disgraceful pieces of malice ever attempted—his wish, namely, to destroy the Kremlin. Part of it perished; but had he succeeded to the extent which he contemplated, Moscow would have been Moscow no more. It was not till after his departure that the citizens were aware how far his spite could go. Mines had been dug under its walls, which exploded one after another, when the French had retired. But the strength of the ancient masonry was such, that no irreparable damage ensued.

In conversation with Russians, we had ample confirmation of the now generally received opinion, that the burning of Moscow was not, as was long believed, a premeditated act of heroism on the part of the inhabitants. It arose from the isolated acts of individuals, who, without reflecting that the flames would spread to their neighbours' property, set fire to their own houses, in order that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy, on whose approach nearly all the inhabitants fled. The first

fires were in the Coachmakers'-street, which lies far from the Kremlin. Once begun, there can be little doubt that some intoxicated Frenchmen, seeking for plunder, had as much hand in spreading the conflagration as the Russians. The wind, however, had a greater share than either; for on the third night it blew so strong that the flames spread irresistibly to the Kremlin, and the most crowded parts of the city near it. Such at least is the account given by one who ought to have known well if government had any share in this work; Count Rostopchin, governor of Moscow,—whose *Vérité sur l'Incendie de Moscou* we find, as just hinted, more reason than ever to look upon as correct, after visiting the scenes he speaks of. It began on the 14th September, the very day the French entered, but the principal destruction was on the 19th; and, before the five weeks of Napoleon's stay had expired, it was a complete desert, scarcely able to shelter, and certainly not to feed, the 120,000 men who were all that he led to Moscow of the 420,000 who, adding 100,000 Germans, 30,000 Poles, and 20,000 Italians to his 270,000 French, composed the vast army quartered so lately as the month of June between the Vistula and the Niemen. Even of his small Moscow band, and of those whom he had between him and Poland, how few survived to tell the truth, either about this burning, or the other disasters of the Russian campaign!

The total number of houses destroyed is variously stated; some authorities saying, that when it ceased on the 19th, 7682 houses had been destroyed; others that, besides palaces and government buildings, 13,800 houses

had disappeared, leaving but 6000 standing. The latter version, though given in the *Histoire de l'Incendie de Moscou*, appears to be exaggerated. Some, in less precise terms, say four-fifths of the city were burnt; others, two-thirds. But however much statements may differ about the number of houses destroyed, all agree on the general fact that, without reckoning the loss of government buildings, property to the value of at least 200,000,000 of roubles (8,000,000*l.* sterling) was destroyed in the conflagration, and that the ruin was so complete as to render it difficult to recognise the lines of the various streets; while the number of half-burned bodies found in the rubbish, not only of cattle, horses, and dogs, but of human beings also, showed that in many places the destruction had come upon the unhappy tenants before they knew of their danger.

All these ravages, as we have stated, are now completely effaced. Not a single ruinous structure is to be seen. In fact, the beautiful buildings which have again sprung up are so numerous, that the stranger forgets that ever the French were here. He passes through street after street without seeing anything but splendour, and is only reminded that he is in the city (the tales of whose "burning" are among the most vivid recollections of his youth) on being told in some public institution, "The fire"—they seldom speak of the French—"but for the fire we should have had something worth showing." Nor was it, unfortunately, the first fire that had impoverished its public establishments. This ill-fated city has been built, and laid low, over and over again, having been at least three times burnt. The recurrence

of such a calamity is now rendered less probable by the precautions employed in building: one-third of the present houses are of stone, but the remainder are still of wood.

During our ten days' sojourn in Moscow, no place attracted so much of our attention as the KREMLIN. We were in it the first night soon after our arrival; and, we believe, every night and every morning of our stay, and always found something new. *Kreml*, it appears, is a Tartar word signifying *fortress*; and, in keeping with this signification, we found on visiting it that it is not *one* large palace, as we had supposed, but a fortified place, walled off from the city, containing *many* palaces, besides churches, nunneries, monasteries, the ancient palace of the patriarchs, the senate-house, the mint, jewel-rooms, &c., many of which buildings are of great extent, and quite detached from each other. This interesting fortress stands in the most crowded part of the city, on a little mount whose base is washed by the slow waters of the Moskwa—a small river which would scarcely fill one of the arches of Westminster Bridge, twining like a line of silver through the wide circle of houses and gardens.

The shape of the Kremlin is very irregular. Of its many sides, some are ten times the length of others. Its crenellated walls, now very ancient, are of great height, and of most massive construction: seen from without, however, their height and heaviness are diminished to the eye by their whiteness, as well as by the light appearance of the towers and palaces rising in such beautiful groups within. After passing the first deep

gateway, the paved court by which the stranger usually enters is found encumbered with cannon: round it stand long ranges of government buildings. Making his way onwards, he passes through a labyrinth of churches and palaces, and at last reaches the large open terrace or esplanade, or where he begins to get better acquainted with the localities. The first thing that occupies him here, however, is the view, which, from the central position of the Kremlin and its elevation above the city, is truly magnificent.

The numerous towers and minarets within the Kremlin itself form groups of most singular and varying beauty; but it is chiefly the city view that here fascinates. The towers, churches, convents, hospitals, theatres, académies—the institutions of every kind scattered over the hollow, and rising gently up the heights—are so numerous, and the whole scene so imposing, that one has difficulty in believing that Moscow is not *still* the capital of the empire. What a country that must be which can boast of two such capitals as St. Petersburg and this!

The ancient city has one immense advantage over its modern rival, from its picturesque situation. It has a thousand advantages, but this one in particular: in St. Petersburg there is not a single commanding point can be reached, unless by climbing some of the churches, from whence a view of it, or even of part of it, may be enjoyed. Here, from the Kremlin, the whole lies before the eye, as comprehensively as in a picture.

A gayer scene than that on the terrace, in the fine summer evenings, cannot be seen, as the more respectable inhabitants come here to walk till nightfall. At the foot

of the walls too, outside, is a fine garden, where all the beauty and fashion of Moscow may be met twice a-week, when a regimental band plays from the ramparts above. The handsome uniforms of the young officers give a lively aspect to this select crowd. The nobles of Moscow being famed for their wealth, the display of costly dresses among the fair on such occasions is always very great; but of the many stately and highly-dressed dames of princely rank, we saw few conspicuous for beauty. Most of them had a couple of footmen walking behind. Few wanted large warm cloaks to guard them from the cold blasts, which become formidable even in August. It was curious to contrast the newest fashions of Paris with the flowing costumes of some Persians lounging on the benches, and gazing in wonder on the gaudy scene. It was altogether one of the gayest and most interesting promenades we have ever visited. Nowhere can Russian manners be studied to more advantage than beneath the fantastic turrets of the Kremlin—in the very stronghold of Russian history and Russian power.

Besides being hallowed by the ancient palaces of the sovereigns of Muscovy, the Kremlin is sanctified in the eyes of every Russian, from the peculiarly venerable character of some of the churches which it encloses. It is, in fact, looked upon as one of the most sacred spots in the empire; and one of its gates in particular is invested with such sanctity, that none can pass through without taking off his hat in reverence: the women do homage by crossing themselves before the holy image displayed in it.

The Greek church delights in pompous processions, and we had the good fortune here to witness one of the

most magnificent of the whole year, termed the Blessing of the Waters, which in some parts of Russia is celebrated in the month of January. At an early hour in the forenoon we took our stand among the crowd, in a large open space, formed by several churches and one of the palaces: here those who were to figure in the procession soon began to assemble, waiting for the principal dignitaries, who met in the Cathedral of the Assumption. The crowd of spectators in the court, on the steps, balconies, and turrets was immense. In order to grace the procession, every monastery seemed to have been emptied. Long trains of monks were constantly arriving, each brotherhood with the heavy banner of their convent raised aloft among them. Every variety of monkish and clerical finery was to be seen—pure white, and glittering gold, and solemn black. The greater part wore embroidered copes of white, green, or blue, according to their rank; all were bearded to the breast, and had huge mustachoes trained round the mouth. As each priest came up, he saluted the brethren near, not with the kiss of friendship on the *cheek*, but with a less becoming one on the *lips*; after which, taking out a large comb, he removed his lofty black cap, and proceeded to deck his greasy tangled locks with most disgusting precision.

Nothing, however, could move the surrounding crowd from their devout and orderly demeanour. Whenever a new banner passed, every spectator uncovered to the sacred signs with which it was adorned. At length, when the ground had been duly strewed with yellow

sand—every banner being raised aloft, every censer waving to perfume the air, and every bell, far and near, pealing loud—forth walked the Metropolitan of Moscow, to head the long array of ecclesiastics. He wore a long white satin pall, and stooped low beneath the burden of a cross laid upon his head and along his back, with both hands raised to help in sustaining his load. On either side of him walked a high dignitary of the church, bearing on a pole a glory, gleaming bright in the sun: many similar emblems followed among the banners.

The pressure of the crowd now became frightful, but we managed to follow the lengthened train, as it wound slowly down the Kremlin mount towards the river. Here, we were told, for we could not come near enough to see, the cross was dipped in the waters of the Moskwa, and other rites gone through. The purport of the ceremony nobody seemed to trouble himself about: all they knew was, that before this day no new honey can be eaten; it is not considered safe till this blessing has been invoked. In what way a procession to the waters can impart a blessing to honey was more than any one could explain to us. There is another grand day, on which apples are consecrated; and yet a third, for some other articles of food.

The great attraction of this show is the high-priest himself. It is one of the few occasions on which he appears in public; and, being highly venerated for piety and talent, all ranks flock in thousands to see him. As he dashed past us, previous to the ceremony, on his way to the Kremlin, with six stately black steeds,

he seemed to be worn and stricken with age; but we afterwards learned that he is still young. His years, in fact, are too few for the high honours with which he is invested; but he owes them entirely to his abilities and learning, which have rendered him a great favourite with the emperor, and given him much influence in the state. Nearly the whole business of the church falls upon him, in consequence of the age and infirmities of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. He is the only ecclesiastic whom we heard spoken of in Russia, as being conspicuous for the time he gives to study as well as business.

Of the many religious edifices in the Kremlin, the *Cathedral of the Assumption*, from which the procession set out, is the most important: in it the emperors are crowned. It is neither large nor imposing, but exceedingly curious, from the number of pictures, frescoes, and gilded pillars, all in the usual horrid taste. The image—no, the picture—of the Holy Virgin of Vladimir is highly venerated. The nature of the Greek religion is shown by the sums lavished in decorating these performances: part of the ornament about her head is valued at 80,000 roubles (3000*l.*) People are to be seen constantly kissing this much-prized treasure.

The toy-looking church, *Spass-na-borou*, so small, that you would think a man might leap over it, attracts little attention, until you are told that it is the oldest in Moscow, and had long the dignity of being a cathedral. It is modelled on the celebrated church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, of which there are several imitations in Russia. In proportions and antiquity it is in admirable

keeping with the fanciful half-Chinese affair near it, with rooms, windows, and arched passages, so small, that one wonders to hear it called the *Ancient Palace of the Tzars*.

The *Granoritaïa*, or *Angular Palace*, is also very old. It consists of but a single-vaulted hall, of many sides, which the Russians, even in the seventeenth century, regarded as one of the wonders of the world. The vaults all radiate from one huge pillar in the centre. Olearius and other old travellers give most marvellous accounts of the splendour with which the tzars, surrounded by their boyars, here received ambassadors in bygone days. It is now used as the banqueting-hall after the coronation. The throne in the corner, under its costly canopy, and the rich crimson velvet on the walls, with other modern innovations, are out of keeping with the antique style of architecture.

Close to that now mentioned, and indeed united with it, stands the *Imperial Palace*, a large and handsome modern structure. It was the residence of the Emperor Alexander while in Moscow. The rooms are still elegantly furnished, but they have a deserted look.

The present emperor has also a palace in the Kremlin—one of the homeliest yet completest royal mansions we have seen. It was his residence before his elevation to the throne; and having spent the first happy years of his marriage here, he still has a great attachment for it. The furniture and general arrangements, like those of his private palaces at St. Petersburg, speak well for the simplicity of his tastes. The musket of a common soldier is shown in one of the rooms, as a favourite piece of

furniture. The emperor uses it in going through the manual exercise, while giving his little sons their first lessons in the art of war. A Polish standard rests near. When residing here he is often compelled to show himself at the windows, to the enthusiastic crowd on the parade-ground below, who will not go home at night till they have seen their beloved Nicholas. On these occasions he generally has some of his children in his hand. The people greet him with shouts of joy.

Nowhere is the amiable empress seen to more advantage than within the halls of the Kremlin. The remembrance of perhaps her happiest days—when love was young, and hope gilded the future with its fairest rays—renders Moscow a favourite residence with her. State considerations of course forbid that she should be often here; but from the warmth with which the inhabitants of all classes speak of her, we should say that in no part of her goodly dominions have her grace and condescension made a stronger impression. Many of her portraits, taken in her bridal days, are shown in Moscow; and all, even at that period, speak of that calmness of judgment and placidity of spirit, which have since made her so valuable a helpmate to a monarch whose ardent character has frequent need to be tempered by the milder counsels of the female heart.

From the emperor's private palace we passed to the *Armoury Palace*—also called the *Treasury*—which contains some most splendid and interesting halls. Here are preserved the state jewels—crowns, sceptres, rings, goblets—beyond number. The intrinsic value of these relics, glistening as they are with gems of great size, is

immense. The history of many of them is so obscure, that men of learning have lately been expressly commissioned to make careful researches concerning them, and the other treasures with which the halls of the Kremlin once groaned. The crowns alone would furnish materials for a volume. They are twelve or fifteen in number, each of a splendour and value far outshining those of the crowns made now-a-days. Some of them are supposed to have been gifts from the Greek Emperor Comnenus to the great Vladimir; but this is one of the points which the learned are now trying to clear up. Several are entirely covered with the costliest diamonds, some with large turquoises, and often on the top is a ruby of great size. The shapes are all different—some low and simple, some high and conical, with stout ribs of gold. The work is generally most exquisite.

Never, perhaps, throughout the whole of his sojourn in Russia is the foreigner more forcibly struck with her immense power than while walking about among these crowns. Almost every one of them formerly belonged to an independent king; now they might be melted down into the one massive diadem of him whose empire has swallowed up the fair kingdoms whose majesty they separately adorned. Here stands the crown of fallen Poland, side by side with that worn by Nicholas when crowned at Warsaw. Next come the ancient crowns of the kingdoms of Kasan, Astracan, Georgia, Siberia, &c. Then follow imperial sceptres massive with gold and gems. In short, apart even from all consideration of the *power* which it represents, this rich collection really amazes the visitor by its *intrinsic value*. There is no great anxiety displayed

about locking up these treasures. They are placed in a room of beautiful proportions and well lighted, most of them under bells of crystal, elegantly shaped, ranged by the wall on one side, and the principal ones placed on handsome pedestals on the floor. Among these, several chemists and jewellers were taking notes, and conducting their examinations.

Rich, however, as this collection is, the jewels now remaining in Moscow are of trifling value compared with those described by ancient travellers: in fact, this city has so often suffered by fire, that not only its treasures, but its very records have disappeared; all the ancient documents have been burnt; so that now, very strangely, the Russians themselves are forced to go to the books of Olearius, or of English travellers, in order to get information about these very jewels and their ancient Kremlin. Had the French got a hand on these, few had now been here; but fortunately they were removed in time to Kasan, 550 miles away.

The same room contains some ancient thrones, great curiosities in their way. There are several chairs, also, of immense value. One, a gift from some of the ancient shahs of Persia, is studded over with thousands of the most precious stones. There is also an ivory one, of great price, beautifully carved by Greek artists, and as old as the time of Ivan III. The double throne of the brothers John and Peter, with a curtained space behind, where their sister stood and prompted them while addressing the nobles, is another of the curiosities. The plain arm-chair of poor Charles XII., found at Pultava, looks sadly out of place among these splendours. Next

follows the coat in which Peter worked at Saardam, now keeping company with the coronation robes of emperors and empresses, all preserved here (for what is not so preserved here?) with great care. There is even a collection of imperial boots and shoes stored up for the edification of posterity. Peter's huge boots would swallow up a dozen of Alexander's puny peaked ones, and as many of the present emperor's smart broad toes into the bargain. That the collection of imperial relics may be complete, they have been at pains to preserve, in the lower part of this palace, the state carriages used by each sovereign—the most ridiculous things imaginable—some of them large enough to carry all the kings of Europe on an airing together.

Amid all these curiosities—many exciting our admiration, and some our smiles—there was one which excited our pity. A stranger whom we met in one of the rooms drew our attention secretly to a small coffer on the floor—there lies, humbled indeed, the CONSTITUTION OF POOR POLAND, with *the keys of Warsaw* over it, as the emperor's brief but emphatic commentary. This insult, if intended as such, might have been spared, even in an imperial toy-room.

One hall is entirely filled with gold articles for the table—vases, plateaux, cups, ewers, figures for flambeaux, and plates of pure gold, two feet in diameter, and of great thickness, &c. &c. The largest and handsomest hall is filled with weapons and armour, chiefly modern, beautifully grouped with specimens of the most striking of the Russian uniforms, from Poland and the north. Among the swords is one of the Emperor Alexander, the

hilt of which is set with jewels, each valued at 10,000 roubles (400*l.*). The helmet and mail of St. Alexander Nefsky, recently dug up, have now come to keep company with trophies of modern armour, as beautifully arranged as ever the pencil did on paper. The collection of horse-gear, as in use in various nations at the present time, is highly interesting; with saddles used by the last khans of Tartary, the present shah, &c.

But the greatest curiosity of the Kremlin yet remains to be spoken of—its far famed *Tom*, or rather, begging his pardon, *John* the Great, Ivan Veliki; for such is the name of the huge bell of Moscow, which everybody has heard of. We have said above that the Russians are mad about bells; and here surely these bell-worshippers have the father of all bells. This venerable gentleman measures twenty feet in height, and eighty in circumference, while its weight, as near as can be, is 10,000 poods or 3,214 cwt. His exact worth cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed to be very great, the faithful having cast in gold and silver to an immense amount, while the casting was going on.

We had the good luck to see this bell to more advantage than any preceding travellers. Only four days before our arrival it had been raised from the pit in which it had lain more than a hundred years. All Russia was rejoicing over the happy disentanglement; and adventurous travellers will no longer have the pleasure of being suffocated by the foul air which formerly made it impossible to creep down into it, except at the risk of life. It is said to have fallen from the place where it was hung during a fire. But more probably it never

was suspended at all ; having been rendered useless by some accident which broke a large piece out of it, apparently as soon as it was cast, the priests would appear never to have moved it from the hole in which it was formed. In later times, many attempts have been made to get it out of the ground, merely as a curiosity ; but all failed, until now that the present emperor, who seldom fails in anything, set to work with ropes, beams, windlasses, and such combination of mechanical powers, that the mighty mass was at length got aloft, and set, a few feet away from its old dungeon, on a platform raised by masonry, a foot or two from the ground. Some idea of the difficulty of this undertaking will be formed from the fact that five hundred men were at work on the levers alone, at the moment it was raised. During our stay the Kremlin was constantly crowded with people flocking from all parts to see the bell. When we entered it the fatal gap in its side yawned like the door of an old cathedral. Even a tall man feels himself very small indeed within it. It being the workmen's idle hour, five or six peasants were sleeping within it, among huge beams and coiled ropes ; but these brawny inmates looked small indeed in the monster's womb.

If the traveller wish to enjoy one of the finest prospects in Europe, before leaving the Kremlin he ought to ascend the *Tower of Ivan Veliki*, at the foot of which the bell stands. It is very probable that he will, like us, have the luck to accomplish the ascent in company with a troop of merry German girls in red frocks—for German ladies are now as frequently met with in all out-of-the-way places as Englishwomen were twenty years

ago. The times are gone when the poet would find *only*

“ Some Mrs. Hopkins taking tea
And toast upon the wall of China.”

We are quite persuaded that he would have an invitation from some Hochwohlgeborene Frau von Altenstein, to a rival party not a mile off. A French traveller visiting Thebes, complains of having had his thoughts grievously distracted by meeting amid its venerable ruins an English-woman in a “pink spencer,” philosophising among the monuments of Egyptian grandeur. But in addition to his English disturbers he would now have to defend himself against Teutonic wanderers; for we are credibly informed that these and other parts of the Pacha’s dominions have of late been made happy by the presence of at least one pair of learned “reds”—not “blues”—from the borders of the Maine. That their countrywomen therefore should be found quite at home on the top of Ivan Veliki did not at all surprise us. This tower, the loftiest and most venerable in Moscow, forms a part of the *Church of St. Nicholas the Magician*. It contains thirty-two bells, of which the largest, weighing 4,000 poods, is held so sacred, that it is sounded only three times a-year. The English, who like to leave their names everywhere, have chalked it over and over with records of their visits.

On reaching the battlements the most careless spectator, however familiar he may already be with the different parts of Moscow seen separately, must be struck with the splendour in which they now burst upon him as a magnificent whole. The number of cupolas and minarets

glittering with gold, or painted with the most fantastic diversity, elegant private edifices, with roofs of green or red, the variety of immense public structures, of every style and object, some of them forming probably the largest buildings in Europe—add too the fresh, showy look of everything—and some idea will be formed of the sights which render Moscow the city without a rival. On this spot, more than any other, one is surprised at the thought, that so shortly ago all this was but a mass of smouldering ruins.

Now that we have given the reader a sketch of some of the curiosities of its most singular portion, we must lead him through the other wonders of Moscow ; but the courage which would not grapple with St. Petersburg will certainly not dream of describing a city which, in the interest and variety of its sights, far surpasses even that sight-abounding capital. St. Petersburg wearies by its monotony, Moscow amuses by its irregularity ; for though the streets are handsome and well paved, they run round, and up, and down, in all imaginable confusion. As to size, the stranger finds both sufficiently inconvenient. Moscow is so large that we never should have got over it on foot ; which, when the place is not too vast, is always the best way for a stranger. Even in a droschky, or a carriage, it is often quite a journey before the desired spot is reached.

That in the number of its sights Moscow is not behind its rival would be sufficiently proved by a bare list of its markets, stored with birds and products both new and rare ; its ranges of shops and stalls for butchers'-meat, fish, fruit, vegetables ; its Gostinoy-dvor—in itself a city, with

lines for every description of dealers, from jewellers down to old clothesmen as ragged as their commodities; its carriage manufactories, enough to keep London rolling; its horse-fair, where all the refinements of the jockey art are exhibited in the highest perfection; its theatres, French and Russian, as well as its riding-schools and exercise-houses, one of which has the largest free roof in the world, it being eighty toises (506 feet 10 inches) long, and twenty-one (133 feet) broad, without pillar or intervening prop of any kind, while the famous roof of the town-hall of Padua, which used to be considered the largest, is only, according to the measurement of Mr Woods, 240 feet long and 80 feet broad.* To all of these should be added its seminaries, convents, &c., but even this dry list we shall not attempt to complete.

* Westminster Hall is 275 by 75; and King's College, Cambridge, 291 feet by 45½, and 78 high.

CHAPTER V.

UNIVERSITY OF MOSCOW.

Public Institutions—The University—Its Library—the Catalogue—Valuable Museum—Professors—Scottish remembrances—Singular discovery connected with General Gordon—Inquiry about the Gordon family—Institution *for Orphans of the Cholera*—Its admirable arrangements—Munificent charities of Russia—Native tutors.

SOME of the public institutions of Moscow are so remarkable, that they cannot be passed over in silence.

Of these the UNIVERSITY is one. The building which it formerly occupied was completely destroyed by the fire, and the fine library reduced to four hundred volumes. The present one is an edifice of great extent and beauty, in the Italian style, containing the new library, museums, lecture-rooms, &c., all of the most complete description. The museum has again become one of the richest in Europe—not as a whole, but in some of the departments of natural history. The collection of zoophytes is very complete, and that of minerals even more so. But the most singular portion of it is the collection of Siberian fossils, among which, as is well known to the learned, there are things not paralleled in any other museum. The tremendous mammoth skeleton looks larger and more complete than the one at St. Petersburg. Among the fragments of animals of which the race has perished, is the celebrated jawbone of the *Elasmotherium*, an animal of which this is the only trace that

has ever been discovered. Along with these antediluvian relics, there are some modern curiosities, such as canoes, large and safe, hollowed from a single bone, &c.

The *library* is recovering rapidly. It already contains about thirty thousand volumes ; but being formed from general contributions, the collection is not very select. The catalogue is on a principle seldom employed in England. In place of keeping a folio for entering each work as it arrives, the title is written on a loose slip of paper, which is placed, under its proper letter, in a line of open boxes, five inches square, along the side of a desk containing a box for each letter of the Russian alphabet. This, though a very mechanical system, is found very convenient for the librarians. In addition to this flying catalogue, there is an admirable *Catalogue Raisonné* now in the course of being printed, of which the first volume has already been published.

The University of Moscow, though the oldest in Russia, was founded only in the year 1755. Among its professors may be reckoned many names of great eminence. Fischer, the naturalist, and others still living, enjoy a high reputation. The number of students in 1808 was only 135, but is now generally about 700 ; of whom one-third belong to the faculty of medicine, about the same number to the ethico-political faculty, and the remainder to the two other faculties, mathematics and literature.

It surprised us “ men of the north countrie ” to meet among the learned of such a remote university one who was as well acquainted with the Brebners, Haddens, and other civic dignitaries of Aberdeen, as if he had belonged

to the good city itself. He had become acquainted with them during a visit to Scotland many years ago. The particular inquiry in which he was occupied at the time of our visit was also of a kind to astonish us a little, at this distance from home ; for, much as we were inclined, like good Scotchmen, to magnify the importance of everything connected with Scottish genealogy, we never expected to find a Russian professor engaged in researches concerning the GORDON family.

It appears that a general of that name, who served in the Russian armies about sixty years ago, had rendered very important services to the empire. He was particularly distinguished as the conqueror of the important city of Azoff from the Turks (1774) ; but having left Russia in his old age, his name had ceased to be remembered, till recently recalled by the visit which the late Duke of Gordon made to the emperor at Kalisch. Little, however, being known of the history of the Scottish soldier, the emperor caused the imperial archives to be searched, in the hope that some documents might be found throwing light on his early career. At the time of our visit nothing had been ascertained concerning the latter part of the general's life ; but these researches led to a much more valuable discovery : for it is said that letters have been found, written by him when in command on the southern frontier, which are likely to be of the very greatest importance at the present moment, in reference to the emperor's plans of Oriental conquest.

This discovery having naturally excited his majesty's curiosity still higher, he had directed that the researches should be continued, and was especially anxious to ascer-

tain whether the general was a cadet, as had always been believed in Russia, of the family of his Kalisch guest. From information which we have lately obtained, this distinguished soldier would appear to have been the General Gordon who long resided at Auchintoul, in Banffshire, and who, at his death, to the great horror of his peaceful country neighbours, was buried in the family vault, in the full uniform of a general in some foreign service, "with belted sword and spur on heel," all as complete as if he had been girt for the battle-field. He was not related to the Duke of Gordon, but was probably allied to that division of the Gordons of which Lord Aberdeen is the head. From the hands of a Russian general the estate of Auchintoul passed into those of a Russian merchant, the late Mr. Morrison, some time M. P. for Banffshire.

We should have heard more of the state of the university, had we not been disappointed of meeting the learned professor whom Count Strogonoff, director, or, as we should call him, chancellor of the institution, had kindly instructed to receive us. Dr. Fischer also was out of the way, at his villa; and, by a melancholy fatality, his assistant had committed suicide the night before. In this concatenation of disappointments, we thought ourselves fortunate in meeting one of the librarians, who speaks English and other foreign languages fluently. The elegance with which all the rooms are fitted up is most remarkable. The museums and libraries of Berlin are mere dingy garret-rooms, compared with these gilded roofs and waxed floors.

It is needless to state that there are many seminaries

of high character, subsidiary to the university: those for the education of the clergy, in particular, are well spoken of. Without entering, however, on any lengthened detail regarding the educational establishments of the ordinary kind, we shall mention one which is certainly among the most magnificent, even in Russia, where everything of the kind is splendid. We allude to the institution for the *education of the children of parents who died of cholera*. From its name, we took it for a charity house, but found it a palace. The able director, M. Schinchin, enjoyed our surprise greatly. Visiting first the inferior apartments, we found the refectory furnished with tables superior to those of the halls of Oxford. The kitchen is as clean as a drawing-room, and the food prepared in it of the very best quality. The diet consists of milk and brown bread for breakfast, three good dishes for dinner, and milk again in the evening, with the same excellent bread, which most Russians prefer to white. Gymnastic rooms and play-grounds are stored with all that can contribute to health and innocent amusement. On ascending to the upper divisions, we found examination-rooms, a small museum, &c., all in high order. The first class-rooms were filled with fine healthy boys, dressed in light-blue jackets and white trowsers *à la militaire*; in fact, they might have been taken for young soldiers, as they walked out in column, &c. The remaining class-rooms were filled with young girls.

But we must now explain the particular object of this institution. Hitherto Russian families have never been able to procure native tutors or governesses; they have always been compelled to commit their children to the

care of teachers brought from Switzerland and other foreign countries. The taste for education having of late years begun to spread more widely every day, this defect was continually becoming more inconvenient; but no effective remedy was devised till the emperor, with his usual quickness, seized the melancholy opportunity offered by the cholera, to provide at once for the public wants, and for the necessitous orphans whom the disease had bereft of support. This establishment was accordingly opened, for the education of such children, till they shall reach the age of nineteen, when they are received into private families, on the same respectable footing as foreign instructors. Besides these cholera orphans, children made orphans by other diseases are now admitted; but, both at first and at present, only the children of *nobles* are received. On remarking that we thought the charity might have been better bestowed on the offspring of more needy families, the director reminded us that there are two kinds of *noblesse* in Russia (he was not speaking of the grades of nobility, which, as we have seen, are much more numerous), an *ancient* nobility who are wealthy, and a *new* race who are poor. The children of the latter are often utterly destitute, while the children of citizens (*bourgeoise*), he said, can never be unprovided for; the guilds, which are very rich, supporting the families of all who have belonged to them. None, therefore, are admitted here except the orphans of nobles, or of state *employés*, who generally belong to some grade or other of the nobility. Of both sexes, there are now three hundred in the house, munificently maintained, with clothes, lodging, and education, all at the emperor's

expense. The large sleeping-room, with its long ranges of white columns and excellent beds, is quite a sight in its way. The two departments are under one general director; but the girls, of course, are more immediately under female instructors. There is a common place of worship for daily prayers; but none are required to conform to the Greek church, if their parents were not of that persuasion. Besides the common branches of education, the boys learn French, German, Latin, but no Greek. The latter is not commenced till they enter the university, which all have it in their power to do at a certain stage of their progress. The girls learn music, embroidery, and the modern languages. There are in all forty-five teachers. The method employed in teaching French is that now generally adopted in Germany; it should be called the *mechanical* system. The progress made is astonishing; as much is acquired in six months as could be done in twelve by the ordinary method. The building is of immense extent and great beauty. Its healthiness was well shown by the state of the hospitals—in each we found only two patients.

Our visit to this place was one of the most interesting we made in Moscow. It was a great treat for the younger inmates to get hold of so many big foreigners, whose education had been so hopelessly neglected, that they could not even speak Russian! One or two of the rooms are occupied by the very young—those from three to six. This part of the house the emperor is always sure to visit: he who is so fond of children cannot, after all, be a *very* bad man.

Institutions of this kind are among the things best

worth visiting, and consequently best worth describing, in Russia; they form the bright side—the *beau côté* of the government. If there be nothing in them that we need to imitate at home, no traveller should fail at least to give the Russian government the praise which it most undoubtedly merits, for the great exertions it is now making in the cause of education. When we think of what has been done within the last thirty years, to provide instruction for the higher classes and for the professions, we need not despair of soon seeing much more done for the education of the poor. The liberal way in which this and every benevolent institution in the kingdom is managed is also most praiseworthy. The charity of Russia is not of a mincing, niggardly, insulting kind—it is done nobly. No parent need grieve at the prospect of leaving his child in such hands: the children are as well dressed and cared for, in every way, as they could be under the paternal roof.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "FOUNDLING" OF MOSCOW.

Catherine's Institution for Foundlings—Immense extent of the building—Expenses—Number of inmates—Singular scene with the nurses—Infants—Apathy of Russian parents—Patients from the ball-room—Objects of this establishment, of a political nature—Melancholy effects on the morals of the people.

THE remarks with which the foregoing chapter concluded apply with particular force to another of the institutions of Moscow—its famous **FOUNDLING HOSPITAL**—one of the most gigantic and most wonderful establishments in Europe.

This building is among the most beautiful of the whole city, and probably ranks with the largest ever built in any part of the world—as may be inferred from the fact that it contains ample accommodation for nearly four thousand persons, young or old, with handsome apartments for the managers, sleeping-rooms, hospitals, lying-in rooms, &c., all under the same roof. There are 2228 windows in it. Though plain, yet the architecture, from its large proportions, has a very fine effect. Several long wings, four or five stories high, are already built; and the plan is such that more can be easily added. The whole is of stone covered with stucco.

This establishment was founded by Catherine, for the reception of infant foundlings, many of whom are nursed and brought up in the house; but the numbers admitted

are now so great that thousands are also sent out to nurses in the country, and brought back when old enough to begin to read. All are maintained till they are fit to be bound out to some trade; or, if possessed of talent, till they can go to college and study for a profession—the whole being at the cost of the establishment, which maintains them till they can maintain themselves. The number of children supported by the house in 1824 was 12,075; in 1831, 23,788; and at the time of our visit there were in all about 30,000, either in the establishment or supported by its funds! The annual outlay is now considerably above 20,000,000 roubles (800,000*l.*): in 1831 it was 17,223,993 roubles.

On our first visit it turned out that the order for admission with which we had been favoured from the governor of Moscow was for another day. Our journey was not altogether fruitless, however, for this untimely visit brought us in for a scene not often to be matched—the sending off of the infants newly received to nurses in the villages, or the farm belonging to the hospital. A long string of peasants' carts, filled with straw, was stationed in the open court; each in its turn drove up to the door, and in tumbled, sometimes two, sometimes three or four stout clumsy women: these were the nurses. A little baby was next handed to each of them, and she instantly gave it the breast. The little imp set bravely to work, and away drove the rustic equipage in gallant style. Two men on the steps were checking the name of the nurse and the number of the child as they entered the carts; for here children are counted pretty much as sheep are elsewhere. The little creatures were swaddled up as tight as pounds of butter going to market.

We were surprised to see *parents* taking a parting kiss of some. We had believed that all belonged to those who were unwilling to acknowledge them, but now learnt that *any one* may send a child to the house, weaned or unweaned. All who do not wish, or are not able, to bring up their children, may leave them here without paying a farthing; so that, though at first strictly a *foundling* hospital, and though the majority of the children depending on it are still of that description, yet this institution now contains many of other kinds. It is, in fact, a sort of general nursing establishment. Whether the parents or the children are improved by this heartless way of breaking all the ties which we usually consider the strongest and the most delightful of the human breast, is a point which the government never troubles itself about: what they want is *subjects at any price*. Though the number of deaths be fully as great as among the infants in all similar institutions, where, it is well known, the average mortality is very high, yet government says, "On the whole, we nurse better than the parents themselves can do, and therefore we want to relieve them of the risk of starving his majesty's infant subjects." Nor is this extinction of the finer feelings the only evil that ensues from such an institution: its effects on the *morals* of the people are of the most deplorable nature, as will be seen immediately.

All maintained in the house are not exclusively at the expense of the government. Parents paying 100 roubles (£4) on entering an infant, have the right of insisting that it shall be brought up *in* the house, the inmates of which are better cared for than those sent out to nurse. For this trifling sum a parent gets rid of the whole bur-

den of clothing and educating his child up to manhood. We wonder if the child looks on the kind nurses here, or its unnatural ones at home, with most affection ! Yet there was one touch of nature exhibited in the crowd. Generally the children sent away were unacknowledged—they had been brought secretly to the house, and nobody knew anything about them ; but some of those about to be despatched belonged to parents who had come with them, and were standing in the court to see them away. The tears hung big on the cheek of a young mother, apparently a widow, as she followed her first-born with long and reluctant gaze—the pang of parting with her babe, though not the first, seemed the bitterest she had yet endured. Beside her, again, were a father and mother most respectably dressed, who had also come to see their infant away, but stood there as unblushingly as if there were no shame in throwing off the ties of nature, and submitting their offspring to the ignominy of being trained a pauper.

The allowance to these wet-nurses is not so munificent as to secure very careful treatment ; five roubles a-month (4*s.* 2*d.*) is all they get. Some, however, when there are many children to dispose of, take two : that is, with the addition of her own child, one of these ill-fed peasant women suckles three infants ! Of course, the poor things are starved. The number of women at command, however, is generally so great, that it is not often necessary to give two children to one nurse.

So accommodating is the emperor to his fair subjects, that one division of the house is devoted to the reception of pregnant mothers, who, on paying a small sum, can come here to be confined. 120 beds are constantly pre-

pared for this purpose. It is open day and night. No question is asked of the visitor—her name is never known, and no one sees her but the midwife. The only distinction made is, that if she come in a fine equipage, as is not unfrequently the case (!), she has a more splendid apartment allotted to her. Every room is good, however, and the attention equal to all comers. We were assured on the spot that instances are known of ladies hurrying here from a ball. Whether they were married or not, none ever knew. They came in secret, and went in secret; their rank betrayed only by the elegance of their dress, and of the equipage they came in. Such facts require no comment! All remain till perfectly cured.

Hitherto our acquaintance extended only to the outside of the building. Returning on the appointed day, we met with great attention from all the managers and directresses—people of good education and good manners. The elegance and cleanliness of everything was quite surprising, in a place where at least two thousand children are constantly lodged, with an equal number of teachers, servants, &c., always in motion. We did not see the boys, but came on the bigger girls at dinner, in a large handsome hall. Here were assembled five hundred well-dressed, healthy-looking creatures, from eight to eighteen, heartily engaged with good fare. There was nothing of the charity-school in their appearance; there was even an elegance in the manner and looks of most. All were dressed in light blue frocks and white tippets—or rather they were bare-necked during dinner, and put on the tippets when they went to play. There was such an unstinted allowance of every dish, that a great

part remained untouched. When dinner was over, the portion of them that were taught singing joined in a hymn, and then all marched out in high spirits, two and two, with a precision which even the emperor's military eye might have pronounced faultless. He is a frequent visitor here also, when in Moscow.

One of the tables was occupied by girls of the most advanced class—those ready to leave the house as governesses; for this institution likewise has now been turned to the same account as that last spoken of. Smart, good-looking damsels they were, with easy, genteel manners. One of them we were told was a bride. They are allowed to see their friends on certain days, and in these short moments, it seems, her black eyes had found time enough to play havoc with a bold Cossack's heart, who was to carry her off in a week or two. The matron said that many of them succeeded in providing good husbands for themselves before the time comes when they are to leave the institution.

It is impossible to visit such a place and not be more and more confirmed in the opinion that the Russians are essentially a good-natured people. We always find these youngsters overjoyed at our visit. The slightest familiarity pleases them beyond measure; and they were all fun and frolic the moment the hour of freedom arrived. A visit of foreigners seems to give them great delight, and the little ones have always many questions to ask. At first they did not know very well what to make of us: the Bavarian ambassador had been expected to visit them the same day, and for some time our party passed for that of his excellency; but even when undeceived as to

our rank, the attention we had been treated with continued the same, plain Englishmen being in most countries reckoned as good as titled Germans.

The girls all go through the same course of education up to a certain age: they are then ranged according to their capacities. Those who can pass certain examinations, and have already shown talents for learning, are advanced to the higher departments, where they study French, German, music, drawing, &c., and at eighteen or nineteen are provided with situations as governesses. Those who show no taste for these things are kept in what are called the *working* classes: that is, they learn millinery work, &c.

The boys are treated precisely in the same way. All who show abilities are sent to the university, after a good preliminary education. Most of them enter the medical profession. One lately got four thousand roubles from the emperor to enable him to travel abroad. In short, everything is on the most princely scale. The two thousand receiving education in the house will enter the better classes of society; and *every one*, whether in the house or out of it, will be enabled to provide for themselves. Of the thirty thousand now depending on it also, all will be free, as was mentioned when alluding to the emperor's reform, and a similar establishment at St. Petersburg. The funds here are so ample that they will be able to increase the numbers when necessary. Besides the allowances from government, the house has a private revenue from money lent, &c., of seven millions of roubles, of which at present only five millions are expended annually.

After inspecting the educational department, with its dependant class-rooms and dormitories, all in the very greatest perfection, we came on what is not the least curious part of the house—that in which the infants are nursed. There is a room in which each child brought in is examined by the surgeon, and a report drawn up of its health and condition. Passing this, we entered a long hall, in which a formidable file of nurses ranged themselves along each side as we entered. Here is a bed for each person, and close by it a small cot for her child. They all wore white aprons and high turbaned caps of muslin, wrought with scarlet and gold, which seems to be the universal livery of a nurse in Russia, just as much as the long white *cauchoise* is of one in France. These ladies are in high training; one might have supposed that they had got the word of command from some female drill-serjeant of their number; for each *presented* her babe, in good firelock fashion, as we passed. There was great kindness apparent, however, in the whole system. Those whose infants attracted our attention for a minute were as happy as if they had been their own. In another place we came on those who have been weaned; healthy and lively imps all of them. The familiarity with which the superiors of the house treated all ages showed that there is nothing like harshness encouraged.

The last place we visited was the room to which the foundlings are brought by their parents or those employed by them. As already stated, *all* are admitted. Only three questions are asked when a child is brought: Whether it is a boy or a girl? whether it has been baptized? and if not, what name they would wish to be given to it? The only other formality is, that the clerks,

of whom one is always in attendance, give the person a ticket, containing the number under which the child is entered in the books, and on producing which, any person interested in the child is entitled to receive information about it at any future day. All are at liberty to reclaim their infants when they please; but, when once taken out of the house, they cannot of course be again admitted.

The question so long agitated, about the effects which such institutions may have on public morals has already, we fear, received in every country of Europe too decisive an answer to render it necessary to say one word on the subject. Foundling hospitals have now long been established in nearly every great capital. There has been sufficient time for judging of their effects, not from one solitary experiment, but from many, conducted among nations of the most opposite habits; and the undeniable result is, as given by Châteauneuf, in his *Considérations sur les Enfants trouvés dans les principaux Etats de l'Europe*, that, in spite of the well-meant predictions of the benevolent founders, public morals have *not* improved in these places; for it is too incontrovertibly established, that, instead of *diminishing*, the number of illegitimate births has been constantly *increasing* since these hospitals were begun.

In no place has this been more glaringly the case than in Moscow. We heard many strange and melancholy anecdotes, illustrative of the pernicious influence which this institution exerts on the morals of females of every class living within its sphere; but the one already given, of the mysterious patients from the ball-room, must of itself be sufficiently conclusive on this painful subject.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXILES OF SIBERIA.

Visit to the prison for convicts on their way to Asia—Government allows the committee of prisons to intercede for them—Dr. Hazy—Description of the prison—Dress and appearance of the prisoners—Crowded rooms—Applications of convicts listened to—Wives and children allowed to accompany them—Touching sight—Band setting out on their long march—Fastening of their fetters—Asked us for Bibles—Visit to the prisoners newly arrived—The murderer—The executioner—The returned exiles—Polish nobleman among the prisoners—The hospital—Police functionary banished—Russians deny that the Poles have been banished in large numbers—Cruel treatment of Poles on the march—Condition of the exiles in Siberia—Nobles can banish their serfs—Curious case of a wife—Siberian statistics.

THE laws of the empire requiring that all those condemned to exile, in whatever part of the country they may have received sentence, must pass through Moscow on their way to Siberia, the traveller has here the best opportunity that can be afforded in any part of European Russia of learning something of the treatment and prospects of those unhappy men.

On reaching this city, they are allowed a brief rest in the convict prison; their daily journeys being so calculated that the separate bands all arrive here, from the opposite corners of the empire, each Saturday night. After resting throughout the ensuing week, during which they are relieved from their chains, they are despatched in one common band on the second Monday after their

arrival; on which occasion government allows some member or members of the committee of prisons to be present, to control the harshness of the jailors or the guards, and to see that none suffer any unnecessary degree of restraint. They are even empowered to hear any statement which the prisoners may make, and, in most cases, to grant immediate redress; or if the application be not of a nature to be granted on the spot, to pledge themselves that it shall be duly attended to after their departure. This, it will at once be seen, is a great indulgence to the prisoners; and the government, so far from thwarting the benevolent visitors, complies with almost every suggestion. These interferences do not, of course, extend to the quashing of legal proceedings, but merely to the prisoner's comforts, his health, or his wishes regarding his family.

The person most frequently present on those occasions is the excellent Hazy, physician to the prisons, one of the warmest philanthropists we have ever known. His exertions in behalf of the unhappy convicts are most incessant. His labours are evidently those of love, and that makes him deem no sacrifice of time or comfort too great. He is a German from Cologne, and as keen a Roman Catholic as that zealous city ever sent forth; but it would be well for the world if half of us possessed as much of the true Christian spirit as this worthy philanthropist. It does one good to have come in contact with such a man as Hazy. We thought better of the Russian government ever after we found them employing such an agent in such a cause.

Being anxious to witness the ceremony of sending

away the weekly band, which could not fail to give us some farther insight into the treatment of criminals in Russia, and enable us to form some opinion on the charges of cruelty towards those condemned to Siberia, which have long been brought against the government, we applied for, and readily obtained, permission to be present on the Monday morning. The prison being situated at some distance from the city, and the departure always taking place at an early hour, we had to leave home by four o'clock in order to arrive in time. It was still dark, therefore, as we drove through the silent streets, and even when daylight came both mist and rain combined against us. But on reaching the Sparrows' Hills (for so the place is called), the sky cleared, and afforded us a splendid view back on the city.

Instead of a frowning prison, we were surprised to see merely a collection of log huts, united, however, and surrounded by a wooden wall, strong and high. Indeed we soon saw that the place, though of seemingly frail materials, is made fully as secure as stone and lime could be—numerous sentinels being posted round it, as well as at every gate. On being admitted, which was done with great caution, and after a strict scrutiny, we found the first court occupied by a file of prisoners already chained for their dreary journey. Poor wretches! with those heavy fetters on their ancles, they were to walk every step of a journey which lasts only a few days less than six months! They were all, men and women, in the convicts' dress, a long loose kind of great-coat made of coarse lightish-grey cloth. The men have one side of their head shaved; but to distinguish soldiers

more readily from the others, they have the whole forepart of the head shaved, in place of the side. All are permitted to retain the enormous beard, in which they take much delight. Each is allowed a low felt cap; but they always remained uncovered when any visitor came near: in fact, the whole time we remained in the prison, the manner of all we saw was not only respectful, but becoming. There was something of composed resignation amongst them, which touched us more than clamorous grief would have done. Of what is still more shocking in such places—levity—there was also none—not a single instance of the swearing and attempted tricks generally seen in such places at home.

Leaving the court, we entered a large prison-room, most frightfully crowded with men, women, and children, who were to depart that morning. Dr. Hazy and another member of the committee were seated near the door, and by them stood the principal keeper, who had the long list of names in his hand, to each of which was added a brief notice of the crime and history of the individual. Always, as a new name was called, the person came forward from the crowd, and, before passing out to have his chains put on in the yard, was asked whether he had any application to make. Many of them had nothing to ask; others had petitions about wife or child, or relations, which were almost invariably granted. If the request be of a kind which cannot be fulfilled without a short delay, the visitors' powers go so far as to entitle them to defer a prisoner's departure for a week.

The readiness, the clearness too, with which they

seemed to state their cases, surprised us ; a few words sufficed : while the firm yet respectful way in which the plea was urged showed that they felt themselves in friendly company. Their joy and gratitude, when any wish was complied with, knew no bounds. The anxiety shown to gratify them astonished us, and proved that the system is not in all respects so cruel as we had imagined. Individual cases of oppression there may be ; but in general the government is desirous to extend every indulgence even to the worst.

The applications were of course of very different kinds. One man, for instance, a Jew, came forward and begged that he might be granted eight days' delay, as his brother, also a convict, would arrive the following week, and it would be some consolation to them, even in disgrace, to travel together. Would this very natural prayer have been granted in England ? Here it was instantly complied with ; and the poor man—he had been condemned for a species of forgery—drew back overjoyed into the throng.

A female who had volunteered to accompany her husband, and had an infant in her arms, wished that they might be allowed to remain a little, to give time for receiving an answer to an application which they had made to see whether the parish would allow their other child to accompany them. This also was conceded. In explanation of this case it may be stated, that by the law, if a prisoner wish to have his wife with him, and she is *willing* to go (she cannot be *compelled*, banishment to Siberia cancelling the bonds of marriage), government pays all her expenses on the journey, but she must

assume the convict uniform and go along with the chain—not *tied*, nor *in* it, but behind it—in one of the carts for infants and baggage. With children the case is different—they belong to the parish, not to the parents. Each parish and each proprietor having an interest in keeping their population as high as possible, parents are not allowed to claim any above five years of age when boys, nor above seven when girls. Boys, in particular, parishes are very unwilling to part with; as may be expected in a country where the numbers to be drawn for the army in each parish depends, not on the amount of population at the moment of drawing, but on the amount a short time before; so that the conscription falls more heavily on those who remain, if they part too readily with youngsters. Sometimes, however, great indulgence is shown, both by proprietors and communities; hence even in this place of misery we saw several happy families—yes, *happy*, for they were all together, father, mother, and three or four children. To such groups exile was but a name.

There were other rooms full of convicts going away. Amongst them were some interesting prisoners, a few of whom will be mentioned below. The ceremony just described was gone through with all, and by the time we returned to the principal court, fetters had been placed on nearly the whole band. It is a cruel operation. The fetters consist of a couple of heavy iron rings, one for each ankle, united by a chain generally two feet long, or rather more, and made of links each four or five inches in length. The chains are not placed on the naked skin, but over the short boot. Instead of being fastened by a

padlock, however, so as to be easily removed at night,—the prisoner is never relieved of them till he reach his journey's end—the chains are *rivettèd* by the executioner who drives an iron bolt through the ankle-rings, and, by strong hammering, flattens it at both ends in such a way, that nothing can take it out—it must be cut through by main force. While the chaining is going on, the serjeant who is to take charge of the prisoners on their journey stands by all the time, to see that all are secured to his satisfaction—that is, in such a way as he thinks will justify him in answering for their safe keeping with his own life. Of the whole band, only one remained still standing by the block. He was pained by the tightness of the ring on one ankle. There was some hesitation about removing it, but the doctor interfered, and it was taken off. Then came the hammering anew—a barbarous sight; every blow went to the heart. The prisoner puts his foot on a block, in the middle of which stands a small anvil, the height of the ankle. The strong executioner, clad in a short coarse great coat, seemed to have little pleasure in his task. There was confusion in his looks and manner: his dishevelled hair, partly concealed by a ragged covering, hung wildly about his face; but though there was something savage about him, he looked, on the whole, shy and timid, as if unwilling to be seen in such work.

The whole band being now fettered, they were again mustered in the yard, after which a new chaining commenced—they had still to be linked four and four together by the wrists. At the head of the line a little table was standing covered with copper coin, from which every

man was receiving, in advance, a certain part of his daily allowance, government giving each, for his maintenance, forty-eight kopeeks, or a fraction less than fivepence a day. To each woman who accompanies her husband half that sum is allowed, and for each child something in proportion.

As the moment of starting approached—the moment when for them the world, *our* world, should cease to have any interest—for when once these gates are passed they are considered as dead, cut off from society—we were more than ever struck with the calm bearing of the troop. So far from being sad or repining, they looked almost cheerful and willing to go. This feeling is inspired by the general leniency of their treatment. Some of the officers employed about them may be harsh, but the *system*, as was remarked by one of our party well acquainted with the prison discipline of England, is in many things much more indulgent than our own. They are warmly clothed, provided with strong shoes for the journey, and plentifully fed. If sick they are also cared for.

All being now ready, the final scene was gone through by the doctor asking—it is the last chance they have of making their wants known—“Whether they were satisfied, or had any request still to make?” All replied, “We are contented; we have nothing to ask.”

Another file near at hand consisted of recruits going to join their regiments, who sometimes march along with the chain, but do so merely for the convenience of forwarding them in greater security; though we cannot but think that this way of associating a soldier's duty with

the punishment of criminals must tend to lower the character of the profession in the eyes of the people. On approaching these, some of them expressed a wish to have a copy of the Bible, of which, it seems, there is always a supply in the prison, furnished by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Their desire was instantly complied with, the doctor requesting that our party should present them, which of course was done with joy, our good interpreter conveying to them our hope that they would practise the precepts of the Gospel, and draw comfort from its promises. The delighted men kissed the hands of the giver with fervent gratitude. Two Poles next expressed a desire to have the same favour granted them, and they also were not refused. That moment was one of the proudest of our lives. We have often, in foreign countries, had occasion to be proud of England; but never had we so much reason to glory in being able to call it our country as here. To find its noble, its truly Christian benevolence thus actively at work in the very heart of a Russian prison—cheering and claiming brotherhood with the most despised, and hitherto the most neglected of mankind—made us feel more honoured in being Englishmen than any one of the thousand triumphs that adorn our history. Bibles and New Testaments, both in Russian and Polish, are always at hand to be bestowed on every one, soldier or convict, who may wish to possess the inestimable treasure.

All being now ready, the gates were thrown open, outside of which the exiles, of whom there must have been more than one hundred, were handed over to a strong guard on foot, belonging to a corps employed, we believe,

exclusively in this duty, all wearing faded blue uniforms. Every man loaded his gun in the presence of the prisoners. There was a mounted escort with long spears; the commander of which instantly began to use the poor creatures very roughly, riding fiercely about amongst them, striking right and left with his strong whip, without the smallest reason for doing so, just as a brutal drover might do amongst cattle. A little confusion prevailed for a time, but soon all was in order, and they moved slowly away,—the *men* in a band by themselves; after which followed the carts with their wives, their children, and their little bundles of clothes; and last came the *female convicts*, marching in a band by themselves, strongly guarded, but not chained.

When they had got to some distance it was terrible to hear the slow regular clank of their chains, as they crept across the turf among the small clumps of fir. They gave us a long look as we turned away—could they be blamed if it was one of envy?

Of the band in march we shall afterwards have to speak when we come upon them in our way eastward. Each day's journey is from twenty-two to twenty-five versts (from fourteen two-thirds to sixteen two-thirds miles English), but never more than the ordinary military march, and there are houses of shelter for them over-night. The escort is always relieved at short intervals.

There was still much to be done after these had moved away. We now had to visit the room in which were confined those last arrived. This, however, was a more pleasing task; for we had the satisfaction of seeing the

poor creatures released from their chains ; which, however short the relief, is to them a most welcome boon, for some had been travelling for months with their heavy load. Among them were several who had not yet received sentence : they were merely passing through, from the government in which they had been arrested, to be tried in that to which they belonged, or where the crime had been committed.

This room we found as much over-crowded as the other : it is disgraceful to the government to huddle so many human beings, however great their crimes, into such narrow space. The only distinction made was between those who had wives and those unmarried ; a separate division of the room being set apart for such as had their wives and children with them. Here again a roll was called, and the crime briefly named, on which each came forward, his chains clanking fearfully on the hollow floor. Generally the keeper allowed them to pass out and be liberated. It was touching to see the lightened step and happy face with which each left the block, carrying his fetters in his hand ; for they are intrusted to his own keeping till the fatal day of departure comes round. When the keeper hesitated about liberating any prisoner—which was only when his crime was unusually great, or when he was notorious for fierceness, or otherwise difficult to manage—the kind doctor interfered, and seldom without success.

But there was one case in which even his benevolence could scarcely say a word : it was that of a murderer, who pleaded hard for release. He had assassinated his wife, his dreadful crime being aggravated by circum-

stances of unusual atrocity. For this he had received sentence of death, as we should say in England, though the term will not apply in Russia, where, as formerly stated, the punishment of death is now almost unknown. But though his life had been spared it was to be a life of suffering. Besides being condemned to constant labour in the most deadly occupation within the bounds of Siberia, he had been punished with the knout, branded with hot irons on each cheek, and had the word "murderer" stamped on his brow. These disfiguring stains added to the sinister expression of his countenance ; and there were some beside him with looks fully as forbidding. Yet, bad and fierce as we knew most of these men to be, and though there were no guards in the room, we walked about amongst them with a confidence which, to speak frankly, we never felt in such a scene in England.

It is impossible to be any time amongst Russian convicts without seeing that they are of a less ferocious temper than our countrymen. The ease with which they are managed is perfectly surprising. In England, double the number of soldiers would be required, and, after all, such a prison would not hold our convicts a single night. They were extremely grateful for the smallest favour or the smallest word. The affectionate manner of the doctor at once gained their hearts. Some few poor creatures bent down to kiss his feet ; others, for whom he had done something, tried to catch his eye, and then wished to kiss his hand. To the men he spoke with great affection, still greeting them with the welcome name of "brother:" the females he saluted on the cheek, the children he fondled ; to all he tried to do some good or

other,—refusing their applications kindly when forced to refuse, and complying eagerly when able to do so. Some wished letters to be written to their relations, or the authorities of their native place, on points which they considered of importance; and though the interval before their departure was too brief to admit of an answer being received, yet they would go away comforted with the assurance that their wish would be carefully attended to, and the answer safely forwarded to wait their arrival in Siberia.

Among the prisoners who most attracted our notice, was a black moustachoed, powerful-looking man, still young. His manly and handsome, though fierce countenance, would have excited interest, even if seen in company of a very different stamp; but he stood alone, and, to our surprise, seemed to be shunned by his companions. Think who he was—the executioner of Moscow, now loaded with chains, and on his way to Siberia! And, for what?—The poor wretch's crime showed him to have still something good about him, notwithstanding his terrible office. It is the law that when this situation becomes vacant, any one condemned to Siberia may have his sentence commuted, provided he accept the unenviable post. He is still a prisoner, but is allowed to live by himself, and to go about free within the walls of the prison. Some time before, this man had accepted the office, but was soon so disgusted with the bloody task, that he made his escape; was caught again, and now irrevocably banished. From having already shown such dexterity in escaping, the keeper was very reluctant to relieve him of his chains; but he pleaded hard, and,

through our party, was successful. He bowed to us in gratitude, and hastened back from the block again to thank us.

Two of the convicts had been condemned for returning from Siberia. They were detected on reaching their native districts. One of them was so old, that it was impossible he could stand this second journey ; yet, old as he was, he could not forget his home : he had trudged through a thousand dangers, and across a thousand wastes, to see it but once ere he died—all this, too, with the certainty that he would be discovered and sent back, under worse circumstances than before, besides receiving severe corporal punishment.

We were much moved to find a Polish nobleman in one of the rooms, undistinguished from the lowest thieves and horse-stealers. His pale and wasted appearance told how much his degradation was preying upon him. Conversation with him was of course not permitted ; but we were told that he had been guilty of falsifying some government papers. The sight of this unhappy individual induced us to try whether we could obtain information about the way in which prisoners of rank are treated ; but we learnt little on this unwelcome subject. It was admitted, however, that they are compelled to march the whole way on foot, the same as the others, and along with the others ; this, too, whatever their offence may have been—whether the charge be of a political or of a criminal nature, no distinction is made. The only indulgence we could hear of, and even of this we are doubtful, is, that they are lodged at night in a less crowded place, and, though they walk with the rest, are not chained. To this

latter part of a nobleman's indulgences, however, we accidentally discovered an exception, in the very case of the individual now mentioned. Forgetting what we had just been told about no nobleman being fettered, one of us asked whether he had chains on like the rest. "Oh, no," at once answered the doctor; but shortly after the poor man happened to move aside his long prison-coat, when it was seen that he was loaded like those we had left. The doctor, though indignant at the abuse, was yet overjoyed at the discovery, as it gave him an opportunity of ordering that the chains should instantly be removed, having been imposed in direct violation of the law. It is highly probable that, whatever the rules may be on this subject, the keepers take the law in their own hands when once out on the march; for unless here, there is no place where a prisoner's voice is heard—there is none to take the smallest interest in them: in fact, they are not heard of more than if dead.

A great proportion of the prisoners had been condemned for petty thefts—some for house-breaking—and a great many for horse-stealing. One man was banished for attempting to pass off a child as belonging to the class of free citizens, while it actually was of the class of slaves. In a country where human beings are the property of their superiors, this is, of course, a great crime. Several had been condemned for sheltering criminals. In one place, thrown among the crowd of men and women of every description, was a clergyman, or rather a monk—a youth with long shaggy hair. We could not make out his crime distinctly, but were told that the numbers of priests, or men in one way or other belonging to that order, who pass here, are very great.

We had now been long in the prison, and seen almost every room ; but there was still one place to be visited—the hospital. It is kept with almost an excess of comfort. We had already visited one of the prison hospitals in Moscow, and found occasion to admire the doctor's care and attention to the poor inmates ; but he said there was a consideration that made this his favourite hospital—it was the first time and the last that most of the patients would know comfort or meet with kindness. In a small room at the end of the male ward was a prisoner of some distinction, with whom the doctor conversed in French, but he seemed unwilling to tell us about him, and the keeper evidently was anxious to prevent us from seeing him. We afterwards heard in the city that he had been high in the employment of the secret police at St. Petersburg, but had abused his power to such an extent, that nothing could screen him from the highest punishment of the law.

A similar room, off another ward, was tenanted by a man evidently ashamed of his position. Seeing that he held down his head, and seemed pained when we came near, we withdrew, and asked no questions—which probably would not have been answered even if we had. His hairs were turning grey. He was evidently a man who had held a distinguished place in society. We heard in the evening that he was a clergyman of high rank, but our informant would not tell his crime.

On the whole, we left the prison with a better opinion of the Russian government. Whatever may be the cruelty exercised at other times to prisoners, here at least there is great kindness, and even indulgence. Yet the question

may be asked, praiseworthy as this treatment is, is there not a *sensitiveness* in their humanity, an anxiety, as it were, to atone, at this late hour, for all the previous injustice, or at least harshness, of which prisoners may have been the victims? Does it not imply a consciousness on the part of government itself, that the law is liable to abuse—that much evil may be inflicted by its agents, for which it would gladly atone by softening in some degree the lot of the sufferer? With all this *show* of humanity, the condition of the exile remains *essentially* unchanged. Clearer laws, and incontestable rights bestowed on the people, would be better guarantees against injustice than all the sympathy displayed in the place we have been describing.

These considerations will be found to have double weight when we view the conduct of the government towards its many *political* prisoners. The treatment of some of these unhappy men is, we have undoubted authority for believing, of a kind that cannot be justified. On this point, even the strongest admirers of Russia must be dumb. Dr. Hazy, indeed, denies, and we believe him fully, that the Poles were banished to Siberia in such numbers as represented in England; and maintains that in no instance were *children* (except along with their parents) sent to that dreary region; or *whole villages*, men, women, and babes, driven away in flocks, as was also reported in foreign countries. That such things could have happened without his knowledge he insists is utterly impossible, for he has seen *all* the prisoners during many years; every man going to Siberia *must* pass this way; there is but one road and one rule for all. He does not deny that many

Poles were banished, but it is the charge of harsh treatment that he repels. They were used exactly like other convicts—neither better nor worse. Those of them who fell ill were most carefully tended. One in particular he recollects—an aged nobleman, who died here on his way, after a lingering illness, in the course of which every indulgence was lavished on him; Prince Galitzin, the amiable and excellent governor-general of Moscow, paying him frequent visits, to ascertain that nothing was neglected. He had come in his own carriage, along with the common escort; but this indulgence was allowed only on account of his infirmities; otherwise his rank would not have exempted him from walking with the rest.

Admitting, however, that in the newspaper statements there may have been exaggeration as to the *numbers* banished, there cannot be the least doubt that much cruelty was exercised on nearly all who were sent. As if

“ The hopeless word of—never to return ”

had not been sufficient punishment, their heavy sufferings were aggravated in the cruellest manner. During their short gleam of comfort in Moscow—and alas, what miserable comfort, to be linked by hundreds among the lowest felons!—there may have been something like forbearance shown to them; but when once out on the march again, their unfeeling taskmasters treated them worse than brutes. A touching picture was given of their condition on the way, in the *Times* newspaper of 3d May, 1832, from which, as we know the statement to be strictly correct, we make a few extracts, in order to acquaint the reader with the true nature of Russian

“mercy.” The passages form part of the diary of a traveller, a native of Poland, who mentions what he saw in the different towns he passed through: for instance, at “WASIL, a little town in the government of Nishnei Novgorod,” he says, “I met fifteen officers from Volhynia, who belonged to the corps under General Dwer-nitzki. They are sent to Tobolsk on foot, to be there put as common soldiers in the garrisons. I want language to describe their misery: still their tears are less consecrated to their own misfortunes than to those of their country. They hope for a divine retribution.

“DRAKZOW.—I met here a large number of children between ten and twelve years old, mothers with their sucklings in their arms, and old men. Farther on the route I met similar groups, consisting of one hundred souls and above: they are unfortunate families who fled for shelter in the forests of Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia: they fell in the hands of the Cossacks, and are now transported as prisoners of war. In entering the government of Mohilew, there are found on all the stations fortified and barricadoed houses called *ostrogi*: These disgusting, pestiferous, and dark huts, destined as quarters for felons condemned to transportation, are now crowded with victims of the insurrection, of every age, sex, and rank, and excite the most heart-rending sympathy.

“KALUGA.—In the *ostrogi* of this town there is now sighing young Gotthard Sobanski, with chains on his arms and feet. After having passed five years in this horrible dungeon, he is now to be sent off to the mines of Siberia for the remainder of his life.

“ LIPNOW, a village in the government of Vladimir.— A singular and frightful noise heard from some distant spot excited our attention—it seemed as if it came from the bowels of the earth. It was that of 150 Lithuanian nobles, who were all chained and barefoot on their march to Siberia. The sentence passed on them was, that they should be put as common soldiers among the regiments of the Caucasus, Orenburg, and Siberia. Shocking was the sight of the two young Counts Tyskiewicz, almost children; at every step they sunk under the load of their heavy chains; they stretched their hands for a little charity, in order that they might buy themselves chains of less weight, which their heartless keepers refused them.

“ KOUPKA, a village in the government of Mohilew.— About one hundred soldiers, all emaciated from sufferings and fatigue, without arms and on crutches, on their route to Siberia.

“ CHORACEWICZE.—Met a detachment of between fifty and sixty soldiers in chains, on their way to Siberia. • They belonged to those who, confiding in the amnesty promised by the Tzar, and guaranteed by the King of Prussia, resolved to return to Poland (from Prussia). Many of them began to cry when they approached us; others tried to sing their national hymn, ‘ Poland, Poland is not yet lost.’ Others exclaimed to us, ‘ Return, return to our dear mother (their country): we hope still once to return again.’ On the other side of this town met Mr. Warcynski, the marshal of Osmiand (the same town where the Kirgises murdered in a church four hundred wives, children, and old men). He was on a waggon with post-horses, under the guard of gendarmes; his

hands and feet were chained, an iron ring round the body, which was fastened to another round the neck; his long beard flowed down to his breast—the head was shaved in the form of a cross—his coat half-black and half-white. He is condemned to hard labour for life.

“BOBRUYSK, a fortress in the government of Minsk.—Six hundred soldiers of the fourth regiment of the line, of the Kuszah chasseurs, and others, are here working on the fortifications. They go in bands of ten, chained together by a long iron pole; the chains are only taken off during the hours of labour. There is also a noble Lithuanian of the name of Zaba, pining here in a dungeon, and awaiting his sentence. He is accused of having intended to deliver over the fortress to the insurgents. When he was arrested, he had a list of the names of the patriots in his pocket. He tried to swallow the paper down. The sbirri tore his teeth open, lacerated the palate, and drew forth from his throat some few pieces of the paper.”

The treatment here described, be it remembered, was not confined to one year and one class of men: Russia is *never* without her political prisoners. We have not the least doubt that, though not pointed out to us, there were several of them in the train we saw sent away. We venture to assert that at this very hour there are hundreds marching the same blood-stained path, and receiving the same unrelenting usage.

Having now seen the exiles before starting and when on their march, let us next inquire what their condition is after reaching Siberia.

The fate of those condemned to the highest degree of

punishment is one of perhaps unmitigated misery—nothing can be more wretched than their condition. From the first hour after their arrival, they are engaged in the most laborious and unwholesome toils—in the freezing depths of the mine, or amid the suffocating vapours of the places where unhealthy chemical processes are carried on—shut up from the light of day, the breath of heaven, the sympathy of their kind. They not only lose goods and rank, but by a refinement in cruelty, they lose their very names—that which marked them to be Christians, and by which they were known among men, is taken away. Christian and family appellations are alike obliterated, and a *number* given in their stead, by which they are always called by the driver when he has occasion to address them.

Hard as all this may be, the government answers, and perhaps with some reason, that such a punishment is better than to take away their lives, which would have been their sentence in almost every other country.

It must also be stated that the number of those who suffer in this way is very limited: the greater part of the Siberian exiles are by no means severely treated: they are more colonists than convicts, and have it fully in their power not only to live in comfort, but to secure the respect of those about them. In fact, until this visit, our notions on the subject were altogether erroneous. Now for the first time did we learn that, to the greater part of the exiles, Siberia is not the terrible land we had always figured it to be. Some prisoners who have made their escape, and got back to Russia, have said that, but for

the unquenchable desire to see their native village, they would not have wished to change their condition.

Most of the convicts are settled out on allotments, which they cultivate ; and as it is the interest of government to colonize the country, and people it as fast as possible, a man with a family is always encouraged. Taking, therefore, the great mass of those sent thither, the true way of regarding Siberian exile would be to consider it as a *new life* to the prisoner. From the moment he leaves Moscow, all connexion between him and the community to which he hitherto belonged entirely ceases ; he is cut off from every previous connexion ; habits, observances, duties—are changed ;—the past becomes a blank ; but the future may not be misery. If he can reconcile himself to it, his lot becomes supportable ; even more, he may amass something, and leave a family, who, taking warning by their father's sufferings, may, by perseverance in the paths of virtue, soon cause their origin to be forgotten.

It surprised us to find that, besides those banished by the sentence of the regular courts, a great many are sent to Siberia by *the proprietors of land, noblemen, &c.*, whose sentence is fully as imperative as that of the judges. When one of his serfs offends him, a landlord has but to condemn him to exile, and he is rid of him for ever. Several of those we saw were of this class. This punishment cannot be inflicted, taking the strict letter of the law, at the mere caprice of the individual ; but in practice it is found difficult to control a nobleman : he is to all intents and purposes irresponsible for the exercise of this dangerous privilege. It being his interest to retain as

large a number of slaves as possible on his estate, he is not, of course, too rash in driving them away.

But that this fatal power may be very cruelly abused is well shown by a case which we heard of in Moscow. A licentious nobleman, who had formed a passion for the wife of one of his peasants, in order to get rid of the husband, banished him to Siberia. There was no escape for the poor man—the law is inexorable, the proprietor's right undoubted. Before leaving, however, he made an application to have his wife sent along with him, with which the woman was eager to comply. But here, of course, the nobleman again interposed his right, refusing the consent without which she could not leave. As, however, the establishment of a precedent of this nature would lead to the most infamous abuses, the affair, which was still undecided at the time of our visit, had been taken up by the law authorities of the crown, who maintained that, though a proprietor cannot be compelled to part with the wife of one of his peasants *condemned by the other courts*, yet that, in the case of a man *condemned by the proprietor's own sentence*, he is not entitled to detain the wife when she is willing to go.

Including vagabonds, who are all sent to Siberia, the total number banished in 1831 was 10,520, of whom 1,700 were convicted of the heavier crimes. In 1833, 7,884 criminals of both sexes reached the inhospitable region, and in 1834, 10,957. By government returns, it appears that the total number of culprits in Western Siberia on the 1st January, 1833, amounted to 33,921 males, and 6,873 females; while the eastern division contained 42,675 men, and 8,589 women: in all, 92,058. On the

1st of January, 1835, the total number of culprits in both divisions was 97,121, being an increase of 5,063 in two years. The greatest proportion of convicts is from the government of Kasan, and the least from those of Archangel and Olonetz.*

* Some readers may not be aware that the account of Siberia contained in the delightful little tale whose title has been borrowed for this chapter is, in general, very near the truth. Those who have seen the country say that the only misapprehension worth noticing into which the gifted authoress has fallen is regarding the *scenery*, which she represents as mountainous, with *avalanches* falling, &c.; whereas Siberia is in reality more free from mountains even than her own monotonous France. It is one of the flattest tracts of our globe.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTES ON THE RUSSIAN CHURCH—ON THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY—AND ON RELIGIOUS SECTS.

History of the Church in Russia—Number of metropolitans, bishops, &c.—Of monks and nuns—Respectability of the religious fraternities—Church honours—Admission of a young monk—Dress and rules of the orders—Profession of a clergyman hereditary—Peculiar tenets of the Russo-Greek Church—Distinctions between it and the Roman Catholic—The Eucharist—Marriage of the clergy—Not to take a second wife—Preaching neglected—Fast-days—Popular religion—More crossing and bowing—Fear of evil spirits—Respect for proverbs—Karamsin's beautiful account of their origin—Sectarians—Razkolniska—Singular tenets—Duchoborzy—General Status, and Conduct of the established clergy—Not respectable—Their ignorance—Fees for marriages—The burial service—Observance of the Sabbath—General state of morals in the Greek Church.

THE national religion of Russia, like every other national distinction, having been more conspicuously forced upon our notice at Moscow than at St. Petersburg, we were now led to inform ourselves more particularly regarding the church in general, as well as the character of its clergy; and we shall therefore, before leaving this stronghold of all that is Russian, throw together a few brief notes on these interesting subjects.

It is a proud fact in the history of the Russian church that, though sprung from a persecuting mother, she has seldom stained her hands with blood.

For many centuries the church depended on that of

Constantinople; but with the fall of the Greek empire fell also the influence of its once mighty patriarch. During a long period after that event the spiritual connexion between Russia and Greece was merely nominal, till at last the Russian church became altogether independent, about the year 1588, when Jeremy, patriarch of Constantinople, who had come to Moscow to collect alms, consecrated a patriarch of that city, and conferred on him the same powers, as head of the church in Russia, which he himself had in the south.

This order of things continued till the time of Peter the Great, who, being ill able to brook a superior even in spiritual matters, declared himself head of the church, and introduced in that capacity many new arrangements. Since his time the ecclesiastical government has been variously modified under different sovereigns. At present there are thirty-six eparchies, of three different classes, only four being of the highest class, those of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Novgorod, and Kieff. There are nine metropolitans, thirteen archbishops, and twenty-nine bishops. All aspiring to these dignities must be members of some monastery, and unmarried. By a statement published a short time since, the number of monasteries throughout the empire would appear to be 350, with 5,330 monks. There are 98 nunneries, containing 4,162 nuns. All of them belong to the strict order of St. Basil. These institutions were once exceedingly wealthy; but Catherine II. clipped them of their wide domains, and the present emperor is said to have an eye on some which are still thought to be burthened with superfluous wealth.

The Russian clergy may be divided into three classes : 1st. Those who are in full orders, including "protopapi," or inferior priests, and "papi," or common priests ; 2nd. Those who are only in what may be called half orders, such as deacons and readers, who are not allowed to administer the sacrament ; 3rd. Those who have received no ordination at all, such as choristers and sacristans, who, strictly speaking, do not belong to the clerical order, but merely discharge the duties of attendants.

It has been justly remarked that the members of the religious fraternities are here of more importance, compared with the other clergy, than in the west of Europe, since from them alone are the highest functionaries of the church selected. They are divided into, 1st. Ecclesiastical functionaries of the highest class, such as metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops ; 2nd. Heads of religious bodies, such as archimandrites (abbots), and igumen (priors) ; and, 3rd. monks.

Whoever aims at the honour of being a bishop, &c., must, of necessity, become a monk. On account of their higher learning and more correct life, the monks are held in much greater estimation than the secular clergy. Ambition and envy are less known among them than among those of other countries, chiefly owing, perhaps, to the fact that they all form, in a manner, but one order. By the strict letter of their rules, they are never allowed to taste flesh. They are never to sleep more than four hours, must fast very often, and, in general, lead a life of the severest self-denial.

The reception of a novice, according to a German author, who appears to have been well acquainted with

the subject, is conducted with great formality. He must answer a great many questions: for example,

Question. What do you want?

Answer. To lead a life of abstinence.

Question. Will you obey your superiors?

Answer. God be my helper, &c.

When all have been answered, the symbolic ceremony of cutting off his hair begins. It intimates that he must now lay aside all evil thoughts and desires. In order, however, to make it evident that everything is done voluntarily on the part of the young monk, he must with his own hand give the prior the scissors with which his locks are to be shorn. The prior, however, puts the instrument aside three different times, indicating that he has no desire to compel him to adopt this strict life. But when the youth still persists in giving him the scissors, he at last cuts off his hair in the form of a cross, and then presents him with the long robe of a monk, the girdle, the cowl, the mantle, and a pair of sandals. The novice now takes the sacrament, and finally receives a taper, a cross, and the kiss of brotherhood.

The dress of the monks is black; that of the secular clergy, on the contrary, is of all colours, blue, violet, and grey, &c. The hair soon grows again after the initiatory rite, and henceforth is seldom touched either by scissors or comb, but allowed to flow over the shoulders in long and filthy profusion. This enormous quantity of hair on the back, with the copious beard on the chin, give them a most singular appearance.

The profession of a clergyman in Russia is in a manner hereditary, though not exactly in the same way as it

was among the Jews and Egyptians, but from traditional usage. Most of the clergy, both in towns and in the country, send nearly all their sons to the ecclesiastical seminaries, where they are trained for becoming either priests or monks. A soldier's son is very seldom educated for the sacred profession, notwithstanding the dazzling prospect held out to him of rising to a bishopric. The proprietors of land, of course, do not allow the sons of the common peasants to enter the church, because they would thus be deprived of the money which they pay to them annually, as well as of their labour as serfs. All connected with the church, down to the lowest verger, are excepted from direct taxes.

In regard to the doctrines of this church, it may be briefly stated, that in general they accord with those of the Roman Catholic. This accordance, however, is merely general ; for they differ in many most essential particulars, three of which deserve to be carefully pointed out. The *first* is, that it holds that the whole body must be immersed three times in water, whether the baptized be an infant or an adult, before the stains of original sin can be washed away. The *second* great difference is in regard to the eucharist, in which the Greeks admit the doctrine of transubstantiation, as well as the Roman Catholic notion of the host ; but they affirm that the bread must be leavened, and the wine mixed with water ; and they allow both elements to be distributed to every communicant, even to children before they have any correct idea of sin. The way of administering the sacrament is to give the bread broken in a spoon filled with the consecrated wine. The *third* important distinction relates

to the marriage of the clergy. While the Roman Catholic church strictly forbids its priests to marry, the Greeks enjoin theirs to do so. This, of course, does not apply to the monks, but to parish priests, who *must* be married. Only once, however, is this permitted. If the wife of a clergyman die, he is not allowed again to assume the bands of matrimony. It would appear, also, that a priest is not allowed to marry a widow. At one time it was even required that a priest should give up his charge altogether when his wife died, and retire to a monastery : now, however, the holy synod seldom enforce this rule. But though the widower still retains his charge, he virtually becomes a member of the holier order of monkhood, and is eligible to the highest honours of the church, provided he has for a time resided in a monastery.

In addition to these characteristics, it ought to be borne in mind that the Greek church rejects the doctrine of purgatory, predestination, works of supererogation, indulgences, and dispensations. Instrumental music is strictly excluded from every part of sacred worship. Vocal music, however, is much cultivated, each congregation having a choir of singers to itself. The people do not sing from books, but merely follow the choristers. The mass is the chief part of their public service. The litany consists of passages of Scripture, prayers, and legends of the saints. The creed is also recited, and the officiating priest begins certain pious sentences, which the people, with one voice, take up and conclude. In short, as has elsewhere been hinted, there is little in the service of this church but the mechanical repetition of mere out-

ward forms. Catechising is scarcely known, and preaching is even still more rare. In fact, at one period—some time in the seventeenth century—all *preaching was most strictly prohibited*, from its being looked upon as too likely a channel for the propagation of new doctrines. We never saw a Russian priest preaching either on Sabbath or week day.

They have many fast-days, and keep them with great rigour. In addition to the Wednesday and Friday of every week, they have four great fasts in the year, the most important of which are, one of forty days in spring, and another of fifteen in autumn, beginning with the first of August. These fasts are observed with much solemnity by the great mass of the people.

The state of religion among the lower orders in general will have been gathered from many incidental remarks scattered throughout these volumes. In order, however, to make the reader more clearly acquainted with their condition in this respect, it may again be stated, that, according to the popular notion, the most important parts of public worship are—first, to pronounce distinctly and fluently the two words *Gospodi pomilui*—secondly, to make the sign of the cross on the breast a countless number of times—and thirdly, to bow the head to the very ground over and over again.

The words *Gospodi pomilui* occur in the service every moment. They mean “God be merciful,” “*Kyrie Eleison.*” Now they are uttered by the priests, the next instant by the choir, and immediately after by the people.

They believe that the sign of the cross, which it was

formerly stated they are so fond of making, has power to drive away evil spirits, as well as to avert every kind of misfortune that man is liable to. The way of making this sign is different from that of the Roman Catholics, who move the hand from the left to the right shoulder: the Russians, on the contrary, and the whole Greek church, move it, in this exercise, from the right to the left. Every man who has any pretension to a devout character, at certain stages of the public service, makes this sign at least twenty times running, all the while repeating his *Gospodi pomilui* as fast as the lips can move, and accompanying it with deep bowing of the head and body. The violence of their prostrations, however, has been already noticed. Some remain stretched on the ground all the time they are in the church. On fast-days, and especially during the penitential services, whole crowds may be seen stretched at full length on the cold pavement.

The common people—may not the higher classes be also included?—have a firm belief in good and bad angels. Evil spirits are the tempters and betrayers of men. As these are believed to be incessantly exciting to all kinds of sin, the superstitious stand in greater awe of them than of God.

The Russians, as has already been stated, professing to be guided by the strict letter of the divine commandment, “Thou shalt make unto thyself no graven image,” reject all round or *solid* figures of the Saviour or of saints, as idolatrous; but pictures, mosaics, *bas-reliefs*—in short, all that is represented on a *flat* surface—they do not consider to be violations of this law.

In further illustration of the popular religion, it may be stated that the Russians have a great regard for proverbs—nearly as great, indeed, as that which they entertain for the maxims of Holy Writ. Some of these are of a political, some merely of a practical nature. Their origin is thus elegantly accounted for by Karamsin :—“ In addition to books of piety, and the wise doctrines of Scripture, which were deeply engraved on the minds of our ancestors, Russia (in the fifteenth century) had a peculiar code of morality, in those proverbs whose origin may in part be assigned to the period in question : such, for example, as ‘ Where the king is there also is the horde,’ and ‘ It was by always saying *yes* that the people of Novgorod lost their liberty.’ Now-a-days men of talent write ; in other times they were satisfied with speaking. The lessons of experience, profound observations, and striking ideas, are imparted by conversation only, in an age of ignorance. Now the dead live in their writings ; formerly they were to be found in their proverbs. All beautiful thoughts, all energetic expressions, were handed from one generation to another. In the present day we skim lightly across what we read, sure that we shall find it when wanted in the book ; our ancestors, on the contrary, made a point of retaining in the mind whatever they heard, for the loss of a single happy thought or singular fact was irreparable. The merchant or the boyar, who could seldom write, loved to repeat to his grandchildren the witty saying which he had heard from his father, which thus in the end became a proverb in the family. It is in this way that, even under the greatest oppression, the human mind finds means of acting ; like the river hemmed in by

rocks, which forms to itself a subterranean path, or escapes in small streams across the masses which oppose its course."

While on the subject of religion, it may be stated that there are few sectarians in Russia. There is one body of them, however, so numerous, that they deserve to be particularly mentioned. They are known by the name of Razkolniks or Roskolnicians (*Apostates*), and first appeared about the year 1606. They do not compose a distinct ecclesiastical body, with peculiar symbols and usages, but exist in separate congregations, independent of each other. They differ from the present church, chiefly, in retaining unchanged the ancient Slavonian liturgy, and in cherishing some enthusiastic notions regarding Christian duties. They have a consecrated clergy; and having been persecuted on their first appearance by the dominant church, they have become very numerous in the districts to which they retired, especially in the east, and towards the south of Russia. It would be tedious to describe all their peculiarities, each congregation having some distinctive shade of its own devising. In general, however, all the Razkolniks agree in declaring the use of tobacco and strong drinks sinful. They also fast much more strictly than the orthodox, and refuse to take oaths. Their strictness in these matters, however, is now fast giving way, as well as their strange ideas about marriage, dress, the priesthood, and martyrdom. Ere long they must merge back into the great body of the church. One peculiarity of theirs is by no means an amiable one—they refuse to shelter or feed those who are not members of their body. An English

traveller who fell amongst them and asked for aid, was beaten from door to door by the women with their besoms. For our own parts, however, though we also traversed the same part of the country, we met with no such reception: they merely made us sleep in the streets all night, without the besoming, for which we ought to be very thankful.

Only one other Russian sect deserves to be mentioned—the Duchoborzy—who differ yet more widely from the Greek church. They have taken refuge on the Steppes beyond the Don, where they still persist in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and refuse to receive any part of revelation except the Gospels. They have neither churches nor priests.

Reverting to the clergy of the established church, it is but fair to admit, that among the upper orders are many men of profound learning and undoubted piety; but it is to be feared that the great bulk of the lower orders are among the most degraded that ever assumed the priestly habit in Europe. No efficient steps having been taken to secure men of good education for the holy office, many of the clergy are as ignorant as the boors with whom they associate. Their want of knowledge might be excused, were they not also chargeable with a more grievous defect—want of good morals. In the large cities their conduct is not so notoriously irregular; but in the country they live as recklessly as the peasants, among whom they drink and riot, without ever attempting to set them a good example. In the prisons and among the convicts we frequently found men who had belonged to the clerical order, brought to the degra-

dation in which we saw them by drinking. Individuals here and there may keep themselves sufficiently respectable, but as a body the clergy enjoy no regard, either from rich or poor. In towns they have little intercourse with their people out of church, beyond an annual visit to the respectable families on the saint's-day, or name-day, of the head of the house, when the "papa"—for so they call the priest—comes to say prayers, and spend the day in eating a good dinner and playing faro. In the country, however, the priest lives entirely among the peasants, drinking with them at home, and driving with them to market; never receiving, and never caring for, any more respect than any other tillers of the ground,—from whom, out of church, he is scarcely to be distinguished either by dress or manners, while their houses are precisely alike in filth and wretchedness. Nowhere are the clergy looked upon as fit companions for gentlemen. A proprietor would never think of noticing the neighbouring pastor. Such, at least, is the account given us by Russian gentlemen, some of whom even spoke of them in terms which we would not repeat. One concluded his remarks with the sentence, "In Russia it is not *the church* we respect, but *the churches*. We always bow to a steeple, but care nothing for him who officiates under it." In the south, especially in Little Russia, we found them much more respectable.

The income of a priest varies according to the quantity of land assigned him. It also depends much on his skill in begging from house to house at certain seasons of the year; and on fees, especially on those paid on

marriages, which vary from five to fifty and one hundred roubles, according to the wealth of the parties. Merchants are extremely liberal on these festive occasions. The ceremony is performed in church with great pomp.

Russian marriages have been so frequently described, that few readers can be unacquainted with the nature of the ceremonies observed on those occasions ; but, as their funerals are less generally known, it may be stated, that in general the Russians bury in the morning. The bodies of the rich are first carried to church ; those of the poor are conveyed at once to the church-yard. Every Russian at his baptism receives a protecting saint, and the picture of this patron is carried before his bier. The accompanying choristers sing passages taken chiefly from the ancient fathers. One of these, according to the German author already referred to, may be translated as follows :—

“ What pleasure in life is not mingled with sorrow ?
What earthly joy is there that can be called lasting ?
All things are empty as a shadow, more fleeting than a dream !
In the twinkling of an eye death takes them away !

“ What is the applause of the world ? What is the end of fleshly pleasures ? What is gold or silver ? O, let us pray to the immortal King, that he would bless his departed servant—that he would grant him rest in his everlasting happiness !

“ I thought on the words of the prophet, when he said, ‘ I am dust and ashes.’ I looked on the grave, and saw the bones which had been freed from their flesh.

I said, ‘Is this a king or a beggar?—a rich or a poor man?—a just man or a sinner?’ Lord, give thy servant rest among the righteous!”

Before the dead body is laid in the earth, the officiating priest gives it the last parting kiss; the same is done by the relations and friends of the departed. Now, however, it is customary to salute only the coffin, or to make merely the form of doing so.

The deceased takes into the grave with him a small ticket, on which a kind of confession or prayer is written; this is called the hope and confession; it is in the Slavonian language, and, though of considerable length in the original, may be thus abridged:—

“Thou, O triune God, didst create me [here stands the name of the person] for virtue; but I have often sinned, and grieve for it sorely. Judge me not according to my works, but according to the true faith, after the wisdom of the only holy eastern church, in which I was brought up. I place my confidence in the love of Christ, and implore pardon with my last breath. Grant me everlasting happiness. Amen.”

This prayer is read aloud, and put into the hand of the dead person. There is no law of the church for it, however; the observance is founded merely on custom and ancient usage.* Mourning is worn commonly for six weeks or forty days, during which period the priest, when he is paid for it, prays night and morning over the grave. Of these days, the third, ninth, and twentieth after the day of interment are the most important; on them the family, according to their circum-

* See *Skizze von Russland*, by a German, &c.

stances, give alms, pray, and cause prayers to be said for the repose of their relative. In addition to all this, the Russians show respect to the memory of their departed friend for several years after his death, by annually repairing to the grave, to offer up prayers and burn incense.

The Russians do not keep the sabbath much better than their neighbours, the Germans. At St. Petersburg, indeed, a considerable distinction is made on this day of rest; the only shops which we saw open were those of a few of the grocers in the morning, and in the afternoon one or two of the glove-shops in the Nefskoi. But in the provincial towns we always observed that the shops and bazaars were open the same as on week-days, while the market-places were even more than usually crowded with people come from the country to sell their fruit and vegetables.

The general state of morals in the Greek church, compared with those of Protestants in Russia, may be inferred from the tables of births in St. Petersburg, published by the holy synod. According to these, it appears that, out of 8,663 births, the number which took place within the year (1834) in families of the Greek church, not fewer than 1,589 were illegitimate; while in the Protestant congregations, in 1,031 infants baptized, only 76 were illegitimate.

CHAPTER IX.

FOREIGNERS IN MOSCOW, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF A FOREIGNER'S PROGRESS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE.

General account of the population—French—Germans—English—Complaints of foreigners regarding the climate—Dreadful winter—Cause explained—Expense of living here—Hotels—English boarding-house—Daily expenditure of the traveller—No beds at most inns—Restaurants—Foreigners find the Russian language very difficult—Best way of learning it—The traveller's most useful words—*Pashloushti!*—*Tchitchass!*—*Pashol!*—Numbers, &c.—Travellers seldom acquire the language—First adoption of the Russian as a literary language.

WITHOUT entering into a minute analysis of the population of Moscow, we may state that, according to the census quoted in Androsoff's account of the city, of the 305,631, which was the total number of inhabitants in 1831, 4,946 belonged to the clergy, 22,394 to the nobility and higher class of public officers, and 16,210 were described as merchants. The great bulk of the remainder of the population are employed in the various kinds of manufactures which have been established within the last twenty years. Besides those of silk, cotton, and woollen, many other branches of manufacturing industry are cultivated with great success.

The proportion of foreigners is much inferior to that in St. Petersburg, there being only 2,691 in the whole city. In general, they are also of a very different

description. There are very few English here; some teachers of languages and governesses in wealthy families, travelling agents for St. Petersburg houses, a few workmen in some of the factories, and some holding situations in the households of the nobility, were all we heard of. There is not one Englishman established in any extensive business. We must not forget to state, however, that there is an excellent English clergyman here, who preaches to his countrymen every Sunday. He has a salary of 200*l.* a-year, of which 150*l.* are paid by the Russian Company, and the remainder, we believe, by a society in London.

A great many Germans live here—professors, lecturers, surgeons—a banker or two, with tailors, bookbinders, &c., in tolerable profusion.

The number of French is also considerable—booksellers, cooks, confectioners; but especially an abundant supply of a class who are so willing to wander in the cause of civilization, that they may now be found, probably, at the foot of the Great Wall, waiting patiently till his celestial majesty shall be pleased to admit them—with their transforming needles and scissors:—milliners, namely, from the Palais Royal.

There would be more foreigners here engaged in business on a large scale, did not the laws of the empire almost prohibit them. No foreigner is allowed to establish himself in the interior without taking the oath of allegiance; in other words, without being naturalized as a Russian subject. In the seaports foreigners are allowed to carry on business without changing their allegiance, being there considered merely as agents, or wholesale

purchasers of produce, for transmission elsewhere. In Russia a foreigner may obtain naturalization after a very short residence, on paying the customary fees and an annual patent. In other continental countries, and France in particular, a long residence is necessary before this step can be gone through.

However long they may have been domiciled in this terrible climate, all foreigners complain bitterly of the cold of the Moscow winter; for, though this city does not lie farther to the north than Edinburgh, the cold in winter is nearly *three times* more intense than that felt in the Scottish capital. To account for this seeming anomaly, the following extract may be given from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

“ In islands, and on the sea-coasts of Europe, the mean temperature of the year is higher, and the heat is more equally distributed through the different seasons, than in any of the other great divisions of the world in the corresponding latitudes. As we advance from the west eastward, the mean annual temperature diminishes; but the heat of summer and the cold of winter increase. Thus London has the same mean annual temperature as Vienna; but it has the summer of St. Petersburg, and the winter is warmer than at Milan. The Mediterranean, the Baltic, and inland lakes of Europe, produce the same effect as the ocean in an inferior degree. The following table, taken from Humboldt's *Memoir on the Distribution of Heat* (Annals of Philosophy, vol. xi.), shows the temperature of the year, and the various seasons, in places having the same latitude:—

Mean Temperature.

Places in Lat. 56.	Of the Year.	Winter.	Spring.	Summer.	Autumn.	Warmest Month.	Coldest Month.
Edinburgh	47·8	38·6	46·4	58·2	48·4	59·4	38·3
Copenhagen	45·6	30·8	41·2	62·6	48·4	65·	27·2
Moscow ..	40·2	10·8	44·	67·1	38·3	70·6	6·

“Copenhagen is about 620 miles east from Edinburgh; Moscow about 1,000 miles farther.”—See *Ency. Britt.*, Art. “*Europe.*”

To be melted by insupportable heat during the short summer is a poor compensation for being frozen during five or six months of the year by a cold so intense as that indicated by the preceding table.

Living in Moscow is much more reasonable than in St. Petersburg: families who would be unable to appear in the capital can here make a very respectable figure on a limited income. Even as strangers, we found our expenses but trifling at the *Hotel de Nord*. The accommodation is much better than we had been prepared for; in fact, fully equal to any met in the second-rate towns of Germany, of which country the respectable and obliging master is a native. The five rooms which our party required cost only twenty roubles (16s. 8d.) a day; and the dinners, though rather too much in the German style, were always reasonable, whether taken at the *table d'hôte* or in private. It is very centrally situated, near the palace of the governor. There is another hotel in the same quarter very inferior in every way. The English-boarding house, kept by Mr. and

Mrs. Howard is very well spoken of; their charge for excellent board and lodging is only twelve roubles a day. Hotels corresponding with our ideas of such establishments are very rare in Russia. There are only three places in the whole empire, St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa, where the traveller can get a bed of any kind; everywhere else people must have their bed and bedding with them, or sleep on the bare floor. *Valets de place* are always to be found in Moscow, both German and English.

The eating-houses of Moscow are very numerous. Several *restaurants* in the French style are far superior to those of St. Petersburg, and may even compare with the best in Paris. Good hackney-coaches, and, of course, droschskies by thousands, are to be had at any hour of the day or night, in all parts of the city, and on very reasonable terms.

In short, Moscow wants nothing that is to be found in any other great capital. It is therefore, in many respects, a much more agreeable city for a stranger than St. Petersburg itself.

All foreigners, even those who have been long settled in Russia, complain of the extreme difficulty of the language. A very protracted residence is necessary, as well as much study, before they can read with any profit. Many who attempt to learn it are staggered, in the very outset, by an alphabet nearly one-third longer than our own, and all its characters, though very beautiful, exceedingly puzzling. Some of these, however, are easily remembered, from being very like those of the Greek. It is amusing to see foreigners, newly arrived, in search of

some particular shop, trying to decipher the legend on a sign-board in these mysterious characters.

Advancing from the alphabet to the grammar, the difficulties multiply, its principles being totally different from the languages with which we are most familiar. A knowledge of Greek facilitates the study to a certain extent ; but, generally speaking, the Russian is more an Asiatic than a European tongue, and therefore requires a long and peculiar course of study before anything can be made of it. Many words are very like the Latin, and often have precisely the same meaning. It appears, however, that in place of being borrowed at secondhand from that classical source, these words have been taken by both languages from a yet earlier root—the Sanscrit—to which nearly all the languages of the earth may be ultimately traced.

Those who find themselves compelled to learn Russian usually repair to some town in the interior where no foreigners reside. An English gentleman lately went to a place about five hundred versts from St. Petersburg, and took up his residence with the clergyman, who, happening to be superior to most of his brethren, was able to give him lessons, charging thirty-six roubles (1*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*) a month for instruction, and sixty (2*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*) for board. At the end of nine months, the scholar had made such progress that he was able to enter a mercantile house with every prospect of being useful ; but, after all, he had not acquired more Russian than he would have done of French in a third of the time.

The way in which the Russians name each other in conversation with a third party, of whom they may be speak-

ing, (of which an instance has already been given,) struck us as pretty enough. They never style persons by their family names, but always by the christian name of the father. Thus, instead of addressing a lady, "Good morning, Anna," if her father's name were John it would be, "Anna Ivanovna" (the feminine) : that is, "Good morning, Anna, daughter of John ;" while the brother of the young lady would be styled "Tom Ivanovitch" (the masculine), or "Good morning, Tom, son of John." When any of the royal family is coming up, if you ask who it is, the answer would not be "The grand duke," &c., but "*Michael Paulovitch*"—"Michael, the son of Paul."

The great words for a stranger are *pashloushti* and *tchitchass*—with these two a man may do wonderful things. There are no bells, be it known, unless in foreign houses. When any thing is wanted, therefore, you plant yourself on the head of the stair, and, in your helplessness, roar out *pashloushti*—"Hey ! come here !" After a befitting pause, *pashloushti* appears in the shape of an intelligent lad, to whom, having no words to express your wants, you *make signs* explaining what is required, pointing to your boots, to your writing materials, or whatever else your wants may be connected with. The lad listens in silence, for he is too well-bred to stop you in the middle with a torrent of words, as a French garçon would do, and too honest to say he understands you when he does not. He waits patiently, therefore, till he comprehends your dumb show, and then shuffles off with a knowing shake of the head, and a consenting *dassj, dassj*—"yes, yes"—or a mysterious *chorosho, chorosho*, changed some-

times into *dobrüy*, *dobrüy*, one or other of which is always on their lips, and means “ Good—all right—*c’est bon*.” Seldom indeed is the negative *njet*, *njet*, “ No, no,” heard on these occasions ; for they are much more quick at understanding than most nations. If wise, however, you will add the second word above named, *tchitass*, *tchitass*, “ Quickly, instantly,” else you run a great risk of waiting long enough for his return.

Beyond these two potent words we cannot boast of great achievements in Russian, always excepting the few indispensable phrases *podajte mnje*, “ give me ;” to which we were able to add, as occasion required, any of the ever-recurring substantives, *vody*, water ; *chlebj*, bread ; *pivo*, beer ; *vina*, wine ; *vodki*, brandy, liquor ; *tchay*, tea ; *koffe*, coffee ; *steklo*, a glass ; *stakkans vody*, a glass of water ; *ssacharu*, sugar ; *masslo*, butter ; *ssür*, cheese ; *tchaschka*, a cup ; *savtrakk*, breakfast ; *objed*, dinner ; *ushin*, supper ; *sslivki*, cream ; *moloko*, milk ; *ssolj*, salt ; *perza*, pepper ; *ukssussa*, vinegar ; *gortschitszü*, mustard ; *kartoffel*, potatoes ; *nosh*, a knife ; *wilki*, a fork ; *tarelka*, a plate ; *sswjeth*, light ; *posstelia*, a bed ; *loschadj*, horses ; *sstol*, a table ; *schljäpa*, a hat ; *ssapogi*, boots ; *platje*, a dress ; *ssertuk*, a great coat ; *kaftann*, a coat ; *kamsoll*, a vest ; *bjeljie*, linen.

The great words in posting are *pashol*, “ get on,” and *skory*, *skory*, “ quick, drive faster ;” which are more impressive from the fact that Russians generally follow them up with something more emphatic than words—good blows, namely, with a stout stick on the shoulders of the poor yemtchik. The following are also very essential :—

Tschto stoit, skolko stoit ; how much does it cost ?
what is to pay ?

Eto dorogo, that is dear.

Eto mnogo, it is too much.

Gdje traktir, where is the inn ?

Spassibo, thank you.

Kogda wu ujedet, when do you start ?

Sawtra, to-morrow.

Tscheres tchass, in an hour.

Pora ujechatj, it is time to be off.

Sdwestwui, good morning.

Dobroi (dobruj) notsche, good night.

Gossudari moi, gentlemen.

Podajte mnje jescht—scho ssaehoru, give me more sugar.

Kotoroi dorogoje mnje itti - - -, which is the way to - - - ?

Proschu, pokashite mnje dorogu, I beg of you to show me the way.

Kakowa doroga, what kind of road is it ?

Gdje chorjain, where is the landlord ?

Kak nasuwajetssja eta derewnja, how do you call this village ?

Kotorüj tschass, what o'clock is it ?

We always noticed that, in telling the price of any thing to a foreigner, the Russians take care to hold up the corresponding number of fingers. When it is only *one* rouble, they do not prefix the numerals, but answer simply "*ru-blé, ru-blé.*" The numbers, which should always be among the first things learnt by a traveller in every country he comes to—at least if he wish to avoid

being taken advantage of every time he pays an account—are as follow :—

<i>Odinn</i> , one.	<i>Ssemj</i> , seven.
<i>Dwa</i> , two.	<i>Vossemj</i> , eight.
<i>Tri</i> , three.	<i>Derjätj</i> , nine.
<i>Tscheture</i> , four.	<i>Dessätj</i> , ten.
<i>Pjatj</i> , five.	<i>Odinnatzatj</i> , eleven.
<i>Schesstj</i> , six.	<i>Dwanzatatj</i> , twelve.

It is not pretended that these are specimens of correct Russian ; they are mere travelling scraps, intended to give some idea of the language to those who have no wish to know more of it. Those who know the language would probably spell them differently : they have been here given as we acquired them from our friends—sometimes by the ear, and sometimes from written notes. The traveller in Russia who speaks French has so little occasion to use any other language, that he rarely picks up even as much of Russian as has now been given.

The following extract gives, in small space, a very instructive account of the way in which the Russian language began to assume its present form :—“ From the thirteenth to the fourteenth century,” says the eloquent historian of Russia, “ our language generally became more pure and more correct. Our scrupulous authors gave up the use of the Russian language, as yet too rude, in order to attach themselves more strongly to that which had been employed in composing the books of our church ; namely, the ancient Servian, in which our Bible is written. They followed its rules, not only in

the declensions and conjugations, but even in the pronunciation and orthography. Nevertheless, as may be seen in Nestor, the force of habit made them often recur to their natural idioms ; a circumstance which has introduced into our literature a mixture consecrated by antiquity, and so deeply rooted amongst us, that often in the same book, and in the same page, we write *zlâto* and *zoloto* (gold), *glad* and *golod* (hunger), *mladost* and *molodost* (youth). The time had not yet arrived for giving to the Russian language that energy, that flexibility, that grace and delicacy, which, in the days of peace and prosperity, are coupled with the rapid progress of the intellectual faculties, with richness of ideas, variety of knowledge, as well as with the formation of taste, and the sense of the beautiful. We see, however, that our ancestors endeavoured to express their thoughts with more distinctness ; that they sought to soften the still too rude sound of words, and to give less stiffness to their style. In short, putting aside all national pride, we may say that though, compared with other Europeans, the Russians might appear very ignorant, they were nevertheless far from having lost all the fruits of civilization—they proved how much force it has to resist the rudest assaults of barbarism.”*

* *Histoire de l'Empire de Russie*, par M. Karamsin, traduite par MM. St. Thomas et Jauffret, tome v. Paris : 1819-1826.

CHAPTER X.

SKETCHES OF LIFE IN MOSCOW.

Scene at the Semonofsky convent—Peasants' holiday—Russian Donnybrook—Cruel treatment of a female—Wild dances—Cossack policemen—Beautiful vespers—Another religious ceremony—Melancholy superstitions—Marriage-feast—Independence of the nobles of Moscow—Their partiality to the ancient capital—Amusements—Horse-racing—English jockies—Extravagant sums paid for horses—Walk in the palace-gardens—Drive to a nobleman's palace in the country—Style of the building—Its apartments and furniture—No fine trees in the grounds—Contrast with an English country-seat.

Moscow abounds with so many amusing sights that every hour of the stranger's time is agreeably filled up.

The best opportunity which we had of seeing the people in their unsophisticated glory was on the evening of one of their religious festivals, when the whole city go to hear **VESPERS** performed at the **SEMONOFSKY CONVENT**, a large mass of fantastic buildings, situated on a fine height about four miles from the Kremlin. The place is much frequented at all times, for the beautiful view which it commands of the city; but on this occasion everybody was there, from the prince to the beggar. The whole road out was one cloud of dust; and on arriving, the place surrounding the convent was already strewed with carriages of every description: of droschkies alone there could not be less than one thousand. While the priests were busy preparing in church, a very different scene, in

fact a sort of Donnybrook, was going on not far away from it. Our steps, however, were first directed to the convent. After visiting the private chapel of the monks, their plain refectory and spacious kitchen, we joined what might be called a select portion of the crowd, composed of citizens, with their gay wives and pretty daughters, promenading in soft green alleys shaded with fine trees. They had evidently come here for anything but the vespers.

Ladies of the bourgeois class dress much more gaudily than the noble dames of the Kremlin gardens; but it should be remembered that, everywhere in Russia, it is only among the women of the very lowest class that any national dress is now to be seen. The long flowing robes and veils of old pictures have given way to the style of dress common among our own ladies. Nothing, therefore, could be more Frenchified than the delicate pink robes here displayed in great profusion: this, with some other shade of red, is in such favour with Russian ladies, that it may almost be called the national colour. Their partiality to *red* is also shown in a less equivocal way: many even of those little above the peasant class paint most glaringly.

The younger women of the middle classes here are prettier than those of the northern provinces. Their features are often very sweet, but rather small, as well as their eyes. Their carriage is more languishing than graceful. The men by whom they were escorted all displayed the usual gentilities of a Russian elegant of the second or third class: long beards, long coats, long boots, and long pipes, swarmed thick among the trees. Kvass,

cakes, strawberries well powdered with dust flying in from the road, cigars too, and pipes, were hawked about or sold in booths. It should be stated, however, that the pipes now mentioned are far from being inseparable appendages of a Russian of any class. In fact, there was more smoking here than we had yet seen in any assemblage of Russians. In general they are little addicted to tobacco, though, as in other countries, the use of it is fast spreading, especially among officers.

All these fine things, however, could not keep us from the humbler but far more attractive part of the fun. This was going on below the beautiful esplanade, on a large green, which the *people*, the genuine crowd, seem to have reserved for their own especial and exclusive pleasures on these occasions. An hour in this place would be worth thousands to one who could hit off national character and dress. Numberless tents were set out with spirits ; for the sober kvass of the genteeler crowd above here gave way to gin and vodki. The strong whiskey smell issuing from these places reminded one forcibly of a country fair in another northern kingdom. Many of the tents were stored with eatables. Open booths also were dotted about in every direction ; while hawkers, men, women, and young lads, were tempting the crowd with gooseberries, beans, carrots, and turnips, all as they had been plucked from the field. The last were in great request, almost everybody eating them. One-half the immense multitude were drunk. Even the women were not sober. Looking at the long draughts which all of them were making from the little black jugs, it was a wonder that one remained fit to walk.

Circles, consisting of six, eight, or ten persons of both sexes, were seated on the grass, singing, carousing, caressing. Here a dozen lads would join in some national song: one would break in with the lively repartee of the comic dialogue; another would at the proper place favour us with a long, long trill; and then all would join in a sudden sharp "hech-hu!" which ended the song. Yonder an amorous pair are singing sweet and maudlin things, scarce able to articulate for excess of joy. But hush—a woman's scream! The brutes, the barbarous beasts! they are pursuing and yelling after a defenceless female. Some one strikes her down, but the poor wretch reels to her feet again, and flies with the whole mob still at her heels, not one of them manly enough to take her part. They are still cheering after the offender, as if they would tear her to pieces, but no one interferes, for she and her lover had quarrelled, and in such a case the mob always sides with the man. In this instance he headed the chase, and such unmanly exhibitions are said to be frequent among the peasants.

When order is restored, the next scene that attracts our attention is of a more lively character—a group of women squatting on the grass, and singing as loud as the loudest. They are neither very young nor very fair; and the Tartar look of many of them is very striking. Most of them have little black sparkling eyes, and olive complexions, but, alack! little of the Italian softness with which the idea of that tint is associated. Near them a band of youths, in long blue caftans, the skirts of which are tucked up in one hand, are going merrily through one of the most intricate of their national dances, squat-

ting, squeaking, and capering, in terrific style—now sinking to the ground, then bounding up again, and whirling round till the eye swims after them. But lo ! the Cossacks are here—fellows in coarse blue jackets and wide trousers of the same colour, armed with heavy whips and huge swords. They have come to keep order, but surely they are wild policemen. The boys have incensed them by their gibes—smack goes the black whip about the ears of one—now goes a thump on the back of another. But all will not do : their short stock of patience is exhausted, and now these restorers of order are blindly running a-muck against all and sundry.

When night began to fall, the ceremonies in the church drew us from those wild scenes. The crowded burial-ground, which we had to traverse in reaching the entrance, is filled with monuments very like those of the German church-yards. The practice of burying in the churches does not appear to have ever been so frequent in Russia as in other countries. The crowd within the sacred edifice soon became very great. A basin of, we were told, consecrated water stood near the door, with an iron ladle in it, from which so many had *drank* that little remained for late-comers. The picture of the Virgin hanging on the wall is so highly venerated that every one kissed its feet as they entered, and mothers had brought their children all the way for this purpose. For a long time the crowd was moving about from place to place in idle expectation. Women, however, we remarked, were not admitted to the sanctuary where the altar stands ; but nobody seemed to object to our entering every part that was open.

When the tapers were lighted, we found the church one blaze of gilding; walls, ceiling, and lofty dome, all in the usual bad taste of the land. Being merely a conventual church, it is not of great extent. The brotherhood is said to be very richly endowed, the present emperor having added to their already great wealth by liberal donations of jewels. When the service began we were perfectly amazed at the magnificent singing. Italy itself has nothing more beautiful. Strong choirs of men, in glittering robes, occupied various parts of the church, every corner of which soon rung to their deep rich voices. The Russians, ever sensible to the charms of music, listened with rapture; and even the strangers, to whom half the treat was lost from their ignorance of the language, could not come away till night was far advanced.

Another religious exhibition, which took place during our stay in Moscow, is also worth mentioning. These things are valuable from the light they throw on national character. Outside the holy gate of the Kremlin, at the end of a fine irregular square, stands one of the oddest and most original buildings ever seen. One is at a loss for something to compare it to. It is like nothing else ever put together of stone and lime, and can only be described as a heap of pepper-boxes towered together, some long, some short, some beside and some above each other, with a bit of red brick wall peeping out at one place, and a piece of green-painted roof showing itself at another. Inquire what this motley concern may be, and you will find that it is a church, or rather a collection of churches, properly called the Cathedral of the Protection, *Pakrofskoï*, but among the populace familiarly known as

Vassilii Blágennoi, or St. Basil. Ivan Vassilievitch the Terrible, by whom it was built in 1554, thought this matchless structure so beautiful, that, to prevent the architect from imitating such a lovely whim elsewhere, he gratefully put out his eyes.

The eve on which we entered one of the many chapels comprised in this edifice happening to be that of some festival, the crowd of poor creatures, aye, and of rich ones too, whom we found crossing and kissing, and bending and mumbling within it, was most immense. The fine chaunting of the priests, surrounded by a blaze of tapers, was again found to be worth all the squeeze. It continued long; but at last one grim official, whom we had not previously seen, unexpectedly issued from a small door, and, bowing like a Chinese, closed the ceremony in a moment. Before departing, however, most of the crowd turned to a precious relic stretched on a small table—an embroidered likeness of the Virgin—and kissed it most devoutly, by way of good night.

Again are we forced to repeat, that all we ever saw, even among the most ignorant Roman Catholics in any country, is nothing to the superstition of the Russians. We had seen so much of it within doors, that we expected to find none of it outside; but their fervour was not yet exhausted. Many were still muttering and gesticulating as they went away from the church; while one old woman, more furious than her neighbours, was prostrating herself in adoration on the stones, in the middle of the throng. For a time we could not discover the object of her worship, but soon perceived that it was to the holy gate she was directing her distant homage, on which,

as in many of the churches, lamps were burning in honour of the evening. The crowd seemed to be greatly edified by her wild devotions. Such street prostrations are not uncommon. We can never find out what it is that fires the enthusiasm of the people in these religious ceremonies. Were there any preaching on the occasion—something said to excite the enthusiasm, as is done, and often eloquently done, by Roman Catholic priests—we could understand it; but we never hear even so much as one word of exhortation or warning. The whole is chaunting and waving of the arms.

While in Moscow we also attended public worship at the ARMENIAN CHURCH. This small but elegant place of worship consists of two divisions: one, the larger, is for the audience, carpetted but without seats; the other is a small domed recess; for the priests and the altar. The men were ranged by themselves on one side of the place, and the female worshippers on the other. The gilded altar, burning tapers, and chaunting attendants, at first seemed very like the Greek worship; but we soon perceived that it is much less monotonous, or rather a still greater departure from the simplicity of the simplest of all religions.

One priest came after another in such strong array, that for a time they were more numerous than their audience. All wore long robes highly adorned. Some were in blue, some in white, others had yellow, and one had pink robes, all sprinkled with gold stars, and all as splendid as the loom could make them. There was one priest with a high black hood, another with a purple velvet crown adorned with stars of gold, similar to those

which glistened everywhere else in such profusion. Some wafted incense on the altar, on the holy books, on the people, through whom they walked all round the place. They were dignified, fine-looking men, with black clean beards of greater length even than those of the Russians, and the hair behind floating in curls on the back. Almost every creature in the congregation, too, had jet-black hair, bespeaking their Oriental descent.

Being wearied by the length of the service, we sat down in the window, but at one part of the service were told by one of the brethren to rise, beyond which no notice was taken of us. The whole service was chanting or reading the Bible, which was done at a small desk near the altar. There was no sermon. The most singular part of the whole was when the red screen before the altar was drawn across, to conceal the priests, who had retired behind it, and who instantly began a low, singular chant or cry of woe, sometimes musically soft and sometimes like the loud lowing of a cow. This was renewed at another stage of the ceremonies, but we did not understand it. In spite of these drawbacks, the service is, on the whole, more dignified than that of the Russian church; but the question which always rose on seeing these changed and numerous robes, these crossings, and shoutings, and lowings—this tinkling of bells and raising of banners—the kissing of the priest's hand—the *acting*, too, of the whole—the question which all this continually suggested was, can this be Christianity—the simplest religion of the earth?

Near the end, the principal priest came and whispered something in the ear of the person nearest him, who

turned round and repeated it to the one behind, he again to his neighbour; and so on till the word of blessing went through the whole assembly. There was crossing and kneeling, just as in the Russian congregations, during the whole of the service, especially among the women, some of the oldest of them bending their foreheads in the dust. The men were much less intent than their Russian friends. They seemed all of respectable rank. There were about a dozen of fine youths present, belonging to the Armenian school, the greater part of them from Tiflis. They receive an excellent education, learning the European languages so carefully, that some of them were able to converse in French and German with our party on coming out. The emperor is very kind to them. They are to be sent back to their native districts when their education is finished.

A marriage-feast among the middle classes in Russia is by no means conducted in a corner. Coming home in the twilight, through a remote but handsome street, we were attracted by the sound of music, and a crowd of idlers gathered round some windows, which were half open. Within sat a solemn assembly, probably merchants' families of the second guild, the females ranged on one side of the apartment, the men on the other. Champagne was poured out, something was said, and the bride—for such her white dress, flowing veil, and the flowers in her hair betokened her to be—rising with dignity from a raised seat at the end of the room, seemed to greet the company, and then sat down. We know not whether the young lady made a speech, but can safely assert that it was neither interrupted by “hear,

hear," nor followed by marks of "great applause." They were in fact the most silent company we ever saw. What amused us most was the part which the crowd outside bore in the proceedings: they stood not only about, but *in* the windows, so near that they might have touched the guests, but behaved with such propriety that they were well entitled to the indulgence granted them.

We have devoted so much time to the crowd of Moscow, that we must be brief in our notice of their masters. We cannot leave the city, however, without saying a few words of the most distinguished and most influential portion of its inhabitants.

The NOBLES of Moscow constitute a distinct class of the empire. The policy of all the latter sovereigns of Russia, but especially of Catherine, towards the nobility, was to draw as many of them as possible to the court. With the poorer nobles the scheme succeeded admirably. She encouraged their extravagance, and then lent them money, which they have never been able to repay; so that they are now implicitly tied to the reigning dynasty. Not so, however, with the richer nobles, and those of Moscow in particular. Some of the wealthiest of them have doubtless long been the greatest favourites and supporters of the imperial family; but for the great body of them they had no lure strong enough. Old-fashioned Moscow and independence were dearer to them than St. Petersburg and its stars, coupled with slavery. Hence it is that the nobles of this important part of the empire have long been looked upon with a jealous eye by the

court ; and, whether justly or not, they are at present, as has been already intimated, regarded as being, of all the nobles of Russia, the portion most generally infected with liberal opinions.

They have constantly before their eyes a monument not likely to diminish their love of freedom—the beautiful group of Mijnine and Pojarskoï, which was erected in front of the Kremlin in 1818, with the inscription, “To the Citizen Mijnine and the Prince Pojarskoï, grateful Russia.” It represents the patriotic citizen of Nishnei Novgorod, in the act of calling on the liberator of his country, to rise and free their native soil from the evils inflicted by the Poles, who at the time (1610) were masters of Moscow. The enthusiasm of the one as he speaks, and the increasing excitement of the seated prince as he hears the rousing tale, are admirably expressed.

Whatever share their love of independence may have in keeping so many of the nobles at Moscow, no one who has seen the two cities will doubt that they show much better taste in preferring it. Not only have they the advantage of living here free from the troublesome etiquette of a court, where they would have to be constantly dancing a thankless attendance, but they also enjoy a life much more varied and agreeable than that of St. Petersburg. The city itself is much prettier, and, from various circumstances, affords a much greater choice of amusements and exercise to the rich than can be found in the modern capital. Their mansions are on the same scale of grandeur as their fortunes ; and English fashions are in as great favour amongst them as English principles. The elegance with which many of them speak our

language, and their predilection for the true English sport—horse-racing—are well known. So fond are they of this amusement, that the race-course seems to be their favourite place of resort in the summer evenings. The season of the regular races had not begun, but we always found the ground crowded with noblemen, young and old, to witness some trotting-match or other. One night, in particular, it was very full; but what a contrast to an English race-course! The company in the stand was not indeed so very dissimilar: it consisted of the principal nobility, who, being as plainly dressed as people of rank in other parts of the world, presented nothing very conspicuous. But the crowd, ranged in very great order along the ropes, had nothing in common with an English one, except the eagerness with which they watched the sport, which, until of late, has been considered almost exclusively British. The greatest difference of all was, that no ladies were present; and we must not omit another distinction, which tells greatly to the credit of their husbands and brothers—there seemed to be little gambling on the occasion. An excellent horn-band kept all in good humour till the hero of the night appeared, in a light racing droschky, with iron wheels, built expressly for such occasions. It is a very smart concern, with room for two persons, but of course carrying only the driver—a long-robed personage, with the most earnest look in the world. One or two more soon drove up, and the sport went on with great life. The speed of the animals may be inferred from the fact, that the trotter in the shafts always keeps pace with a horse running along with him at full gallop. The latter

animal is not harnessed with the other, but mounted by a lad, who works him with great science. There were several good horses, but all were eclipsed by *Bitshok*, the best trotter in Russia. He is a beautiful light bay, strong and handsome, and gets the credit of doing thirty versts (twenty miles) an hour! We saw him do the *rate*, but scarcely think that he is fit for the *distance*. He won the match with great ease, accomplishing his three versts and about a half (two miles and one third) in five minutes, forty seconds. An Englishman present stated his general achievements to be two miles and a half in five minutes! The horse was said to have been sold that morning for 2,580 roubles (£1,000). Rumour doubled the sum; but even the one we have named is a large price, in a country where a horse that will be useful for years may be bought for £9.

The Russians seem determined to deprive poor England of her superiority in horse-flesh, as well as in other matters; and, for this purpose, the racing-club have wisely begun by engaging, at a high salary, a trainer from Newmarket, while nearly all the nobles in Moscow have English grooms. Government likewise is at great expense in maintaining studs at many places, to which some of the best horses have been sent. They also employ agents to purchase horses all over the east; but if fame speak true, these gentlemen are more distinguished for their high prices than their superior judgment. We have heard that the sums which they pay at Bagdad and elsewhere are so ridiculous, that the "Russkys" have become the laughter of the Arabs and Persians, who say that they can get any price for the

most miserable jade, provided they can produce a pedigree with it. Six and seven hundred pounds have frequently been paid for animals worth only sixty or seventy; and three hundred pounds is a common price for a hack. Somebody at a certain eastern court, who wanted to get rid of a couple of useless carriage-horses, put five hundred pounds on each, knowing that the Russians would be sure to jump at them on hearing of such a price.

The ladies, whom we had missed at the race-ground, we found in the gardens of the Petrofski Palace, which is quite near. It would seem to be the Kensington Gardens of Moscow, with this difference, that here the company is almost exclusively noble. It is the most select place of public resort in Europe, the lower ranks, though not excluded, having so many places of amusement more to their taste nearer home, that they seldom visit it. Besides the handsome carriage-drive and beautiful shrubberies, threaded by walks in every direction, there is an elegant summer theatre in the gardens, where a troop, chiefly composed of foreigners, perform during the fine season. On the adjoining promenade, the number of magnificent toilets and showy equipages was greater than we had yet seen in any similar place. The Russians, we have already said, are the most contradictory people in the world; and here we found another proof of it. On some nights, which we thought *warm*, they were to be seen wrapped in heavy mantles; now—probably because it was *cold*—the ladies were walking in what looked very like ball-dresses. While the men nearly all had their large grey military cloaks about them, their fair companions were clad in gossamer.

The neighbourhood of Moscow abounds with country mansions of the nobility. Many of these are very elegant, and their grounds laid out with great taste. We had no opportunity of visiting any but *Astankina*, three or four miles away, belonging to the Cheremetieffs, already named as one of the wealthiest families in Russia. Its youthful lord, being always at court, has seen it only twice in his life. The place, therefore, is not kept in high order. Were it not so gaudily whitewashed, the mansion might be said to have something of a feudal air, with its hamlet and church pressing close upon the gates. The front is Italian, but the wings and corners, for want of a better word, must be described as being in the *Russian* style. The magnificent dining-hall, lavishly adorned with gilding, busts, and carving, savours much of the age of the Grand Monarque. The theatre, with its massive columns, is another piece of Gallic taste. The drawing-rooms are very splendid, and contain some excellent pictures; among which a Claude and a Rembrandt are the best. We saw only one Russian picture in the whole house. There are good copies of the usual statues, placed on pedestals in the drawing-rooms or cabinets; and one or two antiques, the most conspicuous of which, called a Vulcan, probably because its colour comes so near that of the forge, claims a very respectable antiquity, the guide gravely assuring us that it has been *here* two thousand years! There are several memorials of Catherine, but especially her statue, with the inscription "Victoriis potens Liberalitate Victrix." We had seen her just before in the Kremlin, mounted on horseback, in the disguise of a knight.

The first part of the grounds is in the French taste, with formal plots and stiff alleys; but the walks soon become more natural, and at last terminate in a sheet of water, prettily bounded by a village and rising-ground. The gloomy evergreen is banished from these haunts of the great, the fir being replaced by slender birches and other deciduous trees. In all the grounds, however, we did not come on a single tree of stately growth and venerable age, such as abound near the seats of our own nobility. No "unwedgeable and gnarled oak," with its tales of other years—no "nodding beech" that wreathes "its old fantastic roots so high"—no lettered ash, with its records of village loves and village friends now sleeping in distant lands—not a single tree so large that one might,

" Under its shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

In Russia everything looks as of yesterday. It is an old country, and yet there is little in it to link us with the past. This place has probably been in the same family for centuries, but has nothing about it that might not have been "got up" within the last forty years.

In short, there is more poetry in an old grey tower and a clamorous rookery, than in all the fierce splendours of Astankina, and its scores of thousands of serfs. At an English hall—but we are interrupted in our digression: a band of little mushroom-gatherers, wandering through the tall grass among the trees, with baskets and little pails in their hands, come, as if on purpose, to bring back our thoughts from "England and its good green wood."

CHAPTER XI.

MEMS. ON RUSSIAN POSTING AND CARRIAGES.

No roads beyond Moscow—Little to be got at post-houses—Difficulty of getting correct information—No public coaches—Commander of our party—Best kind of carriage—Dishonesty of the Russian coach-maker—Laying in provisions—*Padoroshna* explained—Expense of posting very small—No Road-book—M. de Boulgakof—Our government courier—Attractions of the Great Fair—Our *Marche-route*.

ON leaving Moscow we had wanderings to the extent of full 1,500 miles before us; an extent of ground which would be formidable in any country, but more especially in regions where as yet the only road is an irregular track stolen from the field or the forest, sometimes tolerably good, but, when rain has fallen, next to impassable. Beyond Moscow there is not an inch of made road in any direction.

We knew also that, in addition to bad roads, we should have bad inns to encounter, without beds, without cooks, without comfort of any kind: while, to crown the list of our impending difficulties, we had not beyond a few words of the language, to fight our way through a long file of postmasters, invariably represented as ready to take every advantage of strangers. Under these circumstances, it became necessary to lay our plans well before setting out; and we shall mention them pretty fully, for the benefit of future travellers, who may rest

assured that they will get little aid on the subject in the country itself. The ignorance about travelling in Russia, and about the state of the interior generally, which prevails even among the most intelligent English at St. Petersburg is quite surprising. Many of them having never travelled beyond a hundred versts from the capital, they have really as little idea of a journey to the places we were now to visit as the merchants of Leith or Liverpool. When we asked advice, they always referred us to what we should learn at Moscow; but at Moscow there were few willing to give any advice on the subject. The stranger has to hunt everything out for himself from twenty different channels.

A person ignorant of the language, setting out *alone* on this journey, would find himself very awkwardly placed: fortunately for us, we were *four*. Having entered into a treaty with the two friends who had come with us from St. Petersburg, and whose society we had enjoyed during our stay in Moscow, the first thing we did was to elect a commander-in-chief, in order to maintain some discipline in our little troop. The choice unanimously fell on the gallant veteran whose rank and experience best entitled him to the honour. We knew, moreover, that, to say nothing of his uniform button, his very title, *Herr Palkovnik*, "Mr. Colonel," would strike awe into scoundrelly postmasters and loitering yemtchiks.

We next formed a common fund for the necessary disbursements, elected a paymaster-general, and drew up certain articles of war, to be binding on the high contracting parties throughout the approaching campaign.

These preliminaries settled, we proceeded to discuss

the mode of conveyance which it might be most advisable to adopt. Of public carriages in any shape the traveller will find none beyond Moscow. As a specimen, however, of the accuracy of the information to be got on the subject of travelling at St. Petersburg, it may be mentioned that we had been assured that there was a diligence going regularly to Kieff; but we found that for a long time there had been nothing of the kind. Coach advertisements not being quite so rife in the Bazaar of Moscow as in Piccadilly, it took us long to discover even this fact. The only alternative, therefore, was to buy some kind of vehicle for our journey to the east and south; but what would be most suitable? This question was not easily answered among the hundreds of opinions given us by the coach-dealers, each of whom recommended his own articles, and of course the dearest of them. Natives almost always employ the *telega* on long journeys, from its being nearly the only vehicle of Russian construction which can stand the terrible roads. Young officers who wish to travel cheap often hire one of these from stage to stage. With an open front, to let the traveller see the country by day, and bed and blankets for the night, it is perhaps the best, and certainly the cheapest vehicle of all. It has no springs, but the wood it rests upon is so elastic, that the jolting is not much worse than in a carriage; and it has the great advantage of being strong and clumsy enough to bowl safely through the ruts, which few carriages can long survive. Instead, however, of unsocially embarking in two or three of these small craft, we at once purchased a goodly ship of war, or, in plain language, a double-

seated carriage of spacious dimensions, fit to hold us all four, with our servant in front, and stowage for trunks in the rear. Had the workmanship of the bazaars of Moscow been at all like that of Long-acre, we should have had no reason to regret our bargain. It was not from want of variety that we chose wrong: there are hundreds of vehicles, among which are some excellent carriages, always to be seen in these places; but, to show what sort of conscience Russian tradesmen have, we may mention, that, when the carriage was brought to us, it was found that there were no linch-pins. On remonstrating with the man, he boldly answered, that he had put none, because we had not *bargained* for them. He might as well have said that we had not bargained for the wheels, because neither the one nor the other were expressly named. So much for Russian honesty! For the sake of saving twenty pence in a forty-pound job, he would have allowed us, had the thing not been detected, to start with the carriage in such a state, that we must have broken down within the first five miles!

The next step in our preparations was to lay in provisions; and in no part of our arrangements did we more strongly feel the advantage of having a commander intimately versed in the duties of the commissariat & was our energetic friend. The portable soup, the roast fowls, the tongues, the hard-boiled eggs, the Madeira, and eke the Cognac, proved afterwards to be no unnecessary stock. We might not have starved, absolutely starved, of hunger; but our dinner, unless for his foresight, would often have been worse than scanty. The plates, knives, forks, spoons, drinking-glasses, &c., for which we rum-

maged the bazaars of the city, were also indispensable : there were very few houses by the way in which we could have found any one of these articles.

We were now in condition to apply to the governor for our *padoroshna*, or order from him on all the post-masters along our intended route, enjoining them to give us a specified number of horses. The fee for this document is usually pretty heavy, so many kopeeks per verst being levied for each horse : for instance, a person setting out on a journey of 2,200 versts—say, 1,500 miles in round numbers—and paying two kopeeks per verst, which is the usual charge for each of the four horses he is to use all the way, must advance about £13. 12s. for his *padoroshna* before starting ; but there is nothing lost by it, the horses being charged *so much less* at each station. The *padoroshna* is exhibited at every stage : if the horses be at hand, the master is compelled to furnish *at least* the number ordered in it, but he is also at liberty to give *more*, if necessary from the state of the roads.

The sum paid for the *padoroshna* makes posting in Russia appear very high ; but in reality it is extremely cheap. Thus, in some parts of the country only five kopeeks are paid per verst for each horse, which, even including the two kopeeks of the *padoroshna*, makes the charge for four horses on a stage of eighteen versts ; or twelve miles, only 4s. 2½d. This, indeed, is the lowest price ; but even the highest was only eight kopeeks in place of five, making the charge on a twelve-mile stage exactly six shillings for four horses. This is the price in all the more frequented parts of the country : in England it would not pay the turnpikes !

The yemtchiks (postillions) generally get a trifle from foreigners at the end of each stage—a rouble, or even half a one, sends them home overjoyed. Russians give nothing.

Every traveller ought also to furnish himself with a *marche-route*. There being no books of roads and posts, it is customary to apply to the clerks of the post-office before starting from St Petersburg or Moscow, who, for a fee of ten or twelve roubles, make out a list in Russian and Italian characters of all the posts on the line, with the number of versts between each—a help which we found of the greatest consequence.

Carriage, provisions, padroshnas, are things easily got; but there was still another—a more serious want to be supplied: how were we to get on without the language? In the last chapter we have laid before the reader our whole stock of Russian; and he will admit that it is sufficiently scanty for such an expedition as was now before us—more especially as the post-masters notoriously take advantage even of Russians, where it is possible, and of course are doubly active in fleecing foreigners who cannot speak for themselves. The worst loss of all sustained through them is the loss of time. Foreseeing our danger, and knowing that a common servant inspires little awe on the road, we waited on the director-general of the post-office, M. de Boulgakoff, to ascertain whether he could spare a government courier to accompany us—a favour which, we had heard, is sometimes granted on paying the man's expenses, which are very moderate, with of course some gratuity on sending him back at the end of the journey. We had the good

fortune in this instance to have to deal with one of the most gentlemanly men in Russia: he instantly granted our request, assuring us that nothing gave him greater pleasure than to show attention to Englishmen. Our courier turned out to be not only a handsome, soldier-like fellow, in smart military coat and white trousers, with cocked hat and sword, but also one of the most faithful, persevering companions we could have desired. The very sight of him seated on the box, with his sword lying beside him, struck the innocent natives with wholesome terror, and made the postilions drive as if the emperor himself had been at their heels.

Instead of going direct south to Odessa, we first made what for Russia is a short detour, by going some 300 miles out of our way, in order to see the great fair of Nishnei, which has now become the "lion" of Russia. All who come to this country must go to the fair, if they do not wish to spend the remainder of life under the reproach that they neglected the only opportunity they can ever have of seeing one of the most singular sights in Europe. The emperor himself was to be there, besides one or two of the foreign ambassadors, and not a few idle travellers like ourselves.

To avoid the trouble of returning all the way to Moscow, however, we were to make a cross-cut by Melenky, Kazimoff, and Riazan, so as to join the great route to the south at Toula, and thereby have the advantage of crossing a wide district of country very little visited by strangers, as well as the satisfaction of adhering to a rule which we have generally found a good one in travelling: namely, never to spend time and money in going unne-

cessarily over the same ground a second time. There are other routes to Nishnei besides the one we followed. Many go to Jaroslavl by land, and thence down the Volga on some of the huge market-barges; but the navigation is often dangerous, and always tedious.

To give the reader a more correct idea of the ground we are about to traverse together, we subjoin a copy of the French column of our *marche-route*, supplied by the post-office at Moscow.

MARCHE-ROUTE.

De Moscou à Nischni Novgorod, et de là par Mourom, Riasan, et Toula, à Odessa.

Moscou, Capitale.			
	Verstes.		Verstes.
Novaya	22	Doskino	26
Bogorodsk, ville du district	26	Aleschkaro	21
Plotawa.....	23	Yarimowo	25
Pocrow, ville du district ..	22½	Osiablikowo	19
Lipnia	28½	Monakowa	31
Dmitrievskoye	28	<i>Mourom</i> , ville du district ...	30½
VLADIMIR, ville du gou-		Koulaky	18½
vernement.....	22	<i>Melenky</i> , ville du district ..	18½
Barakowa	12	Okchewo	23
<i>Soulogda</i> , ville du district .	24	Dmitriewo	19½
Moscock	31½	<i>Kassimow</i> , ville du district..	19
Dratchevo	25½	Eraktour	30
<i>Mourom</i> , ville du district ..	28½	Tscherskoye	27
Monakowa	30½	Kistrous	23
Osiablikowo	31	Sounboalowa ,.....	29
Yarimowo	19	RIASAN, ville du gouverne-	
Alechkowo	25	ment	26
Doskino	21	Tcherskoye	29
NISCHNI-NOVGOROD, ville du		<i>Zaraisk</i> , ville du district ...	27
gouvernement	26	Ousounowa	29

	Verstes.		Verstes.
Wenev, ville du district ...	31	Kolomaky	25
Anischina	28½	Waynorskaya	28
TOULA, ville du gouverne-		Doudnikowsky Khoutor ...	16
ment	27	POLTAWA, ville du gouverne-	
Yassna Poliana	17	ment	20
Solowa	18	Kouremyarsky Khoutor ..	17
Serguiyerskoyé	24½	Reschetylowka	18
Scouratowo Maloyé	25½	Kirilorsky Traktyr	18
Scouratowo Bolcheyé.	18	Pestchannyé	23
Mitzensk, ville du district ..	25½	Omelnik	12
Otrada	27	Krementchoug, ville du district	22
ORÉL, ville du gouvernement	25	Tvitina Balka	24½
Khotetowa	23	Alexandrie, ville du district	27
Borissogtébsteaya	25	Noraya Praga	21
Otchky	25	Adjamka	25
Olkhovatka	16	Elisabethgrad, ville du district	22
Sorokovoy Kolodèze	21	Kompaneevka	24
Ysakievsky Potchtowy Dvory	23	Sougakley	21½
Koursk, ville du gouverne-		Gromokley	18
ment	17	Maximowka	19
Slikowy Potchtowy Dvory..	17	Wodenaya	16½
Medwenka	18	Weylandowa	20½
Ob'yane, ville du district ..	24	Kandibina	23
Kotchetoosky Potchtowy		Nicolaew, ville du district ..	24
Dvory	18	Warwarowka	3
Yakowbewo,.....	20	Tschemerleyskaya	25
Belgorod, ville du district ..	28	Sassitskaya	22
Tcheremochnoyé	26	Tiligoul	22
Liptzy	22	Adjeilk	28
KHARHOW, ville du gou-		Odessa, ville du district	18
vernement	28		
Lubotin	26		
Walky, ville du district ...	28		

2,290.

CHAPTER XII.

EASTERN RUSSIA, FROM MOSCOW TO VLADIMIR.

Morning scene—First specimens of true Russian roads—Sandy deserts—Peasants—Villages—Pigs—Dogs—Hunt of heads—Huts—Stoves—Forests—Harvest—Fields—Buck-wheat—*Bogorodsk*—Pleasures of travelling on the same line with the Emperor—Harrowing the roads—Danger of meeting a Prince—A night in the streets of *Plotava*—Our next-door neighbours—Pass the exiles on their march—A sorrowful sight—Stopping at the stations—Many horses required—VLADIMIR—Another night in the streets—Rain!

WE bade adieu to Moscow on a beautiful autumnal morning. The long streets were crowded with the usual early throng of large cities—milk-carts, barrows with vegetables, loads of screaming poultry, and every other market dainty that a great capital can require or a rich country produce. But soon after passing the eastern gate we found all as dreary and silent as the desert.

The space occupied by the road, or rather by all that serves for a road, to the east of Moscow, is at least one hundred yards wide—an inviting stretch of heavy sand, or, more generally, of mud and water, through which you may choose any one of the twenty wheel-marks by which it is deeply furrowed. In the first stage or two sand predominates—waves of it from wood to wood.

The hamlets on this route look very miserable, with the doors of the houses almost choked up by drifted sand. On the more frequented routes of other parts of the coun-

try the arrival of a carriage generally excites some attention; but here the peasant keeps his seat by the door, and never troubles himself about who comes or goes. Even when people are seen moving about in these singular places, they only heighten the loneliness: with noiseless step and downcast eye, and wearing garments the very colour of the sand, they look like so many phantoms deprived of rest. The villages, in fact, are silent and lifeless, without even a dog to bark you out of them. Pigs are also unknown; not one has been seen since we left St. Petersburg.

There is one wayside scene, however, connected with the animal kingdom, not unfrequent; mothers, namely, in front of their cottages, eagerly engaged among their children's hair, in a sport which has not inappropriately been termed "a hunting of heads"—not for ideas, but for things much more tangible and abundant;—a sport for which we must not condemn the barbarous Russian without including the classic Italian in our censure: for the sight is not unfrequent among the Florentines, and some of their painters have not disdained to make it the subject of their pencil. The day is not long gone by when even in some quarters of Rome the people might be seen spending their holiday in this animating exercise, three of them one above the other, chasing and chased!

The cottages here are generally constructed of clay and stone. On entering any of them, we always found a large portion occupied by the stove, which is placed in a central position, so as to make one fire heat the kitchen and a couple of rooms at the same time. It seems to be built of clay and stone white-washed, and is so large, that, while its interior forms the fireplace, its surface, about the height of a table, supplies the want of a kitchen-

dresser. At one place, where preparations for the family dinner were going forward, pipkins full of peeled mushrooms were scattered about on it, waiting for the onions which the sleepy mistress was slowly chopping with an iron weapon heavy enough to cut off heads with. The people seemed always to be greatly amused when we popped into these dens, and searched about among their coarse earthen jars and bowls—of metal utensils they have very few—in order to get initiated into their domestic mysteries.

From St. Petersburg to Moscow almost the only tree is common fir, but now the pine (or spruce) becomes frequent. For a long way on our present route the soil is thin, but not unproductive. Buck-wheat and rye are the favourite crops. There is not a great breadth, however, under cultivation of any kind. In many places women were busy with the rye-harvest; but, on the whole, buck-wheat is the most frequent crop. Its grain constitutes the favourite food of rich and poor in this district, and is really very nice, either baked with meat or eaten alone. The plant is about a foot high, and, with its bright flowers and glossy leaves, is a great ornament to the dull landscape. When ripe, it is generally pulled up by the roots, not cut.*

In the dull grassy *Bogorodsk*, a district-town thirty-two miles from Moscow, booths were set out with the holiday fare of green peas and beans, substantially flanked by loaves of mixed flour, of excellent quality, and so cheap that for a couple of shillings we might have provisioned our party for a week.

* For a more full account of the buck-wheat, see farther on, when we come amongst the Cossacks, by whom it is extensively cultivated.

Even before reaching this place we began to feel the inconvenience of travelling on the same line with the emperor. At every post the horses were either kept in expectation of him, or taken up by his *avant-couriers*. The roads, too, strange to tell, were monopolized by his majesty: that is to say, the best track in the middle had been raked anew for him, and the gaps filled up with branches, over which earth had been spread, and the whole brought to a tolerably level surface. But on this tempting line no ordinary wheel was allowed to trespass. In fact, we had to search about for a safe pathway where we best might—sometimes on the road and sometimes off it—in the wood or in the field, as the case might be.

At one place we witnessed a scene which may give a good idea of what real Russian roads are. At first we could scarcely believe our eyes, but, on coming nearer, found that some people, whose motions had greatly puzzled us at a distance, were actually harrowing the road. Both man and horse, toiling wearily from side to side of the poached declivity, seemed to think it rougher work than was ever afforded by the ploughing of a field. Such is Russia, the land of contrasts, with roads in some places so fine that the broom is employed to sweep them, and in others so rough that the harrow is their daintiest leveller.

We now saw large flocks of cattle feeding by the wayside. There were frequently as many as two hundred of them together, generally white, but sometimes brindled, and always very handsome and in good condition. They feed on each side of the road, the same as on the

great one which we had already traversed. There are invariably slips of fine grass, of width corresponding to that of the road, which at one place was so spacious, that, while we were wandering on foot in search of mushrooms and plants by the side of our tardy vehicle, we could scarcely see another carriage, which was wading through the sands far away on the other margin. Though we had been creeping on all day, night found us only forty-seven miles from Moscow, in the long miserable village of *Plotawa*, where we were doomed to meet a specimen of the pleasures of travelling in Russia more impressive even than any we had yet seen. We had already experienced delay from coming in contact with the emperor, and now had to do penance for encountering one of his courtiers, Prince Butera, whom we met here on his way from a journey through the Ural mountains. As his convoy of three or four carriages required nearly twenty horses, none remained for us. It was impossible to go farther that night. This, it will be said, could be no great misfortune; better to sleep in peace than be jolted all night on a villainous road. But the reader forgets that we were not in England, the land of beds and comfort: here there was not a single bed to be got in the post-house—nay, not even a room to sit or lie down in, till the horses should return. We could not get so much as a hole to eat our dinner in; and therefore, putting as good a face on matters as possible, we set bravely to work, and made a dining-room of our carriage, devouring in our hungry wrath a whole hecatomb of cold fowls,—an operation which we performed to the complete satisfaction of all the boys and girls of the village, who had gathered round

us on the occasion. The poor vehicle was also our bedroom, for—not a single hole having been opened to us, not even an out-house of any kind—unless we had chosen to sleep on the cold ground and in the open air, there was absolutely no place in which we could shelter ourselves but in the useful limits of the carriage. As already hinted, it was not, thanks to Muscovite taste, of the smallest dimensions; but nothing that ever ran on wheels could have been a very sufficient bed-chamber for four persons with such gifts of chest and limb as all of us laid claim to.

One of our party, indeed, out of complaisance to the others, slept *à la Russe*, viz., on the ground, with no more shelter than the projecting eaves of the post-house might afford him, and vowed that it was mighty pleasant. But, even with this diminution of our numbers, we had a curious night of it in that narrow street, with hundreds of waggons and carriages creaking constantly past us to the fair. Travelling, like adversity, makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows. Our carriage was alongside a singularly-mounted waggon, with arched roof and axle-trees like the pillars of a church, in which lay an officer, his wife, and their children, come all the way from Tobolsk. The little creatures were as quiet as if it were as natural to live in a house on wheels as in one that never makes long journeys. The Russians have profited by the example of some of their Kalmuck neighbours, who, in former times, had no other home but their *kybitkas*, or carts. Hence, it is only when horses are wanting that a Russian ever thinks of stopping in the evening while on a journey: his rule is to travel on, night

and day, without intermission, whether the journey be of six weeks or six days.

When at last we started in the morning, the first sight that struck us was a melancholy one—the poor convicts whom we had seen setting out a few days before on their march to Siberia. They do not march in a regular column like soldiers, but are spread into a large straggling band. They eyed us so wistfully, that we could not help commiserating them the more. Most of them might well say—

“Every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world
I wander from—the jewels that I love!”

They were toiling on, with no prospect of ever again revisiting the land of their affection. We passed several more of these bands within the next few days. The houses in which they spend the night are wretched hovels, generally at the outskirts of a town or village. When the band is on march, men are constantly riding about amongst them to see that no attempt at escape is going on, and making the whip play upon their shoulders with the most wanton brutality. The prisoners also know that for the smallest breach of rules the loaded gun is at the shoulder in a moment, or, what they dread even more, that there is a knout at the next sleeping-place.

The country now began to improve a little, being occasionally varied with gentle heights, from which wide sweeps of cultivated land may be seen, with trees and spires dotted through them. Until the nearer approach of winter, the grain seems to be left on the fields in very

neat stacks, sometimes square, sometimes round, with an open passage through each to let the wind circulate.

Those accustomed to good roads could form no idea of the number of horses required in these districts during the fair to which we were now travelling. Most of the villages have little to support them but the carrying-trade of these few weeks; and, fortunately for them, the roads are so bad, that seven horses, and even nine, are very frequently required by each vehicle, whether a private carriage or for goods. Six is the average allowance. The waggoners are not so large, nor the loads so heavy, as those usually seen in other countries; but on such roads as these the rule is to take as many horses as can be got.

While stopping at the stations we often met officers of the army travelling from distant posts, and, as all of them spoke either French or German, we were generally able to get some information about the places we rested in. One had come an immense journey from some distant part of Asiatic Russia, in a rude thing like a hill-cart, with scarcely any covering; while his servant, a rough soldier, sat, or rather was bundled on behind, on a board scarcely large enough for a dancing-dog, and without the smallest shelter. They had been travelling for a month or two; but, if their expenditure in other articles had been as moderate as their outlay on soap, the emperor would not be much out of pocket by them; for, though the gentleman actually washed himself on seeing us do so, he confessed that water had not touched his face for eight days before.

The only stay which we made by the way was for

breakfast and dinner, which were always eaten in great mirth and thankfulness. When it was possible to get a room to sit in, the stores were unpacked, and we held our feast in the post-house, where not a particle was to be got to help out our fare. All the villages and towns, however, furnished delightful bread, a few stalls being always laid out in the principal street with a fresh supply of this necessary article. When we had no intention to stop, our colonel's jolly shout, "*Lo-she-te, lo-she-te,*" emphatic for *loschadj*, "horses," soon brought the wanted relay. When we were to make any stay, the younger members of our caravan made the quaking stairs and remote kitchens ring with cries of "*Tchay! tchay!*" "tea! tea!" and "*Wody!*" *wody!* "water! water!" That we should use tea was nothing new to the Russians; but that we should be such fools as to waste the good water in washing ourselves was to them something quite incomprehensible. In fact, we could scarcely get hold of basins with water to wash in, so little are they accustomed to such an extravagance.

In all parts of the empire, but especially on the road, the inns of small villages, and even of towns, are much worse provided, and more uncomfortable, than the smart post-houses built by government at lonely stations, where there is not perhaps another house within sight. We always remarked, however, that, whatever might be wanting in these places, the very poorest could boast of a brass tea-urn, of classic shape and size. The most public rooms, also, invariably contained a picture of the Saviour, and often one of the Virgin, or of some saint, in addition.

We passed through *Pocrow*, *Lipnia*, *Dmitrievskoyie*, and other villages or towns, varying in size from three hundred to eight hundred of population, without meeting a single thing worthy of being noted. Evening brought us to the handsome town of VLADIMIR, capital of the government of the same name, seventy-two miles from our starting-place of the morning.

Here we were again forced to pass a night in the street—whether at the gate or at the post-house remains a mystery ; for it rained so fiercely that no adventurous foot stepped forth from the carriage, to rouse the slumbering inhabitants and seek for shelter—which we were assured beforehand could not be got. The lightning flashed about us as if in mockery of our helplessness ; but—so good a nurse is fatigue—neither rain nor thunder kept us from sleep. When morning came the place proved to be one of the finest provincial towns that we had yet visited ; but we saw little of it, being too glad to hurry on, now that our journey was likely to be so seriously impeded by the rains, which made the roads, bad enough before, all but impassable. The weather was completely broken : for several days, we might almost say for several weeks, we now scarcely had a dry hour.

The best view of Vladimir is obtained by looking back after crossing the *Kliazma*, along which it is built. Standing high on the wooded bank, with its lofty church and large barracks rising among some ancient-looking structures, which give it a general air of antiquity, it would form no bad subject for the pencil. This city has made a figure in history. It was long the seat of the

Dukes of Vladimir, and was frequently ravaged by the Tartars. It is also held very sacred from its ecclesiastical dignity, but especially from its traditions of Alexander Nefskoï, whose ashes reposed here till they were removed to St. Petersburg. Like the other ancient cities of Muscovy, however, it has sadly sunk from its former glory; the population now scarcely surpassing three thousand souls, most of whom live by sheltering or forwarding the numerous carriers and travellers who pass to the fair. The cherry-orchards, which adorn the town, also help to support it, the fruit being in great request at Moscow.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM VLADIMIR TO NISHNEI-NOVGOROD.

Statistics of the government of Vladimir—Harvest scenery—Terrible roads—A stand-still—How to treat the postillions, or Russian persuasion—State of the roads a reproach to the government—Evils of a large carriage—Appearance of the people—Russian mode of nursing children—Muddy villages—Mourom—Its churches—Market—Cross the Okka—No lively streams in Russia—Sands—A woodland drive—Merry postillions—Tartar huts—Female costume—Dull forests—Scarcity of birds.

THE government of Vladimir, whose capital we were now leaving, contains a population of 1,200,000 souls, and ranks among the most important in the empire. The climate is favourable to every description of crop—wheat, oats, barley, rye, hemp, &c., being raised in considerable quantities. A great part of the population, however, is employed in manufactures of different kinds. There are not fewer than four hundred of these in the government; but the cotton-works of Prince Cheremetieff appear to be the most considerable. The spinning-works of other proprietors employ about twenty-five thousand workmen. Fine cloths are not made to any great extent, but the manufactures of glass, crystal, and leather are very successfully prosecuted. The peasants nearly all belong to the noble families of the country, who are also proprietors of the principal manufacturing establishments. The number of schoolmasters in the whole government is 105,

attended by one scholar to every 234 inhabitants. There are many wealthy monasteries and other religious institutions, some of which possess as many as eight thousand serfs.*

The country about Vladimir is very pretty: its soft well-cultivated slopes, crowned with abundance of trees, both fruit and forest, and the small divisions of the fields, recall some parts of Herefordshire; but the high enclosing hedges are wanting. The eye frequently commands wide stretches of corn-land, which were richly covered with grain ready for the sickle. The fields look wonderfully neat, and appear to pay the farmer well for his labour. But the reader need not be told that the general aspect of an agricultural district in Russia is very different from that of an English corn-country. There is no intermixture of green crop to vary the prospect; turnip, clover, and even potatoes, being almost unknown.

A scene of plenty, however, such as was now before us, is always agreeable to look upon, though very different from those we are more familiar with; but the pleasure we should have had in travelling through it was marred by the terrible state of the roads. They were now so bad, that we were sometimes up to the naves in mud, and sometimes ploughing our way through sinking turf, among trees and bushes; and, more frequently than all, we were at a complete stand-still, our *yemtchik* beating the horses with what remained of his whip, and our courier beating *him* with a huge stick — with a rope — a branch from the nearest tree — in short, with whatever came first

* See SCHNITZLER, pp. 101—106; and the *Dictionnaire Géographique de la Russie*, article "Vladimir."

in the way—or perhaps kicking him most industriously with his feet, till we put an end to all these amiable familiarities. Neither of the parties, the postilion least of all, could understand why we should not permit the beating to continue. So little are these poor creatures accustomed to kindness from their superiors, that he was completely puzzled when he received a piece of money to encourage him to persevere in his laborious efforts to get the carriage through. He looked at the giver and then at the coin, as if some “cantrip” were about to be played off upon him. It was such a mysterious thing to him altogether, that, instead of the usual profusion of gratitude, he pocketed it with trembling, never doubting but that we had by this gift intended to purchase full right to thrash him to our hearts’ content at the end of the stage.

After a long series of breaking of traces, applying of shoulders to the wheel, &c., matters began to look better ; but not till one of our six horses was so completely knocked up, that he had to be turned adrift in the bog. On reaching higher ground the track was more firm ; but even then it was sad work. At one moment the horses would scarcely be able to drag us through the mire, and the next few yards they would be splashing and plunging, through holes deep enough to bury streets in. Yet this is no by-road ; it is the great route to Asia ! one of the most important lines of communication in the whole empire. Shame upon the emperor ! If he had any particle of true policy about him, he would not have another review, nor build one frigate more, till something efficient has been done towards improving a road which

brings more wealth to the country than all his holiday battles and rickety ships can squander.

For these difficulties, however, we were ourselves partly to blame. We ought not to have taken so large a carriage to travel in through a country where every vehicle should be as small and light as possible. In place of four horses, which we had been told would be quite enough for it, we seldom had fewer than six, and sometimes eight—yoked six abreast, and two in front. Yet, whatever number of horses we might order, the postmasters and peasants were always frightened at so large a machine, and delayed us, coaxing and bargaining with them at each stage. Our baggage, also, from the incessant jolting, soon began to be troublesome ; neither chains nor ropes would hold it. The springs, of course, had soon yielded ; so that there was no end to our patching and hammering.

The small towns of *Barakowa*, *Soudogda*, &c., were so full of mud, that while changing horses at them we could not set a foot on the ground, for fear of having to be dragged out with ropes. The houses in the villages here press much more closely on the road than in those of the north. In other respects we perceived no difference in them, nor in the people, who dress precisely like their brethren within fifty miles of St. Petersburg : a trimming of some cheap kind of fur round the edge of the sheepskin is all the distinction.

The traveller never sees infants in these Russian villages. Nursing, which occupies so large a portion of the female population in other countries, seems here to be unknown. We do not recollect that in any part of

the country we ever saw a woman with a child in her arms. In fact, Russians appear never to *carry* children : there may be seen near all the houses a small hand-carriage, in which the youngest of the family is *dragged about*. It is not unusual to meet women returning from the distant field, pulling one of these behind them, with a brat perched in it, swaddled up like a mummied cat.

We travelled on through these places without stopping—our backs not *quite* broken, but greatly damaged by the jolting. The excessive cold of an autumnal night gave us some idea of what a winter one must be in these regions. Morning brought us in sight of MOUROM, a district-town of considerable importance, eighty-one miles and a half from, and belonging to the same government as, Vladimir.

The first glimpse of this place in the early sunshine was more than welcome after such a night. It lies on the high ridge which here forms the west bank of the Okka, one of the mightiest tributaries of the Volga. Judging by the imposing appearance of its long-extending line of towers, and large clusters of cupolas, we should have pronounced it a city in rank inferior only to Moscow. But, alas ! it is a most miserable deception. Here are churches enough for at least twenty thousand inhabitants, but there are not more than 4500 in all. It is often thus in Russia. The churches seem to eat up the towns they stand in. What promises at a distance to be all splendour, turns out to be an assemblage of hovels, crouching at the foot of mountains of whitewash and gilding. We found the streets and squares wide enough for a capital, but so full of mud, that, like the people of the Landes, we

should have required stilts to walk from door to door upon. The inhabitants are as black and filthy as their native mire. Mourom was formerly one of the principal places in Russia for the manufacture of leather but the townspeople find themselves in altered circumstances since the foreign demand for Russian leather diminished so much.

The Russian towns occupy more than three times the extent of ground covered by places of equal population in England. Large spaces are required for their numerous churches, ill-kept squares, and wide streets. In fact, they generally possess all the pretensions of a capital, being often divided into *gorod*, city ; *poçad*, quarters ; *slobodes*, suburbs ; with *celos*, or dependent parishes ; a *kreml*, or fortress ; and a *Gostinoï dvor*, bazaar or caravan-serai.

The market-place was full of open booths, clustering round the largest church. Forty or fifty of those booths contained nothing but cucumbers : many were full of bread, the coarser kind in large round lumps, the finer in small loaves, with a *handle*, as in the other towns, to carry it by. There is a *black* bread in some places, which we tried to eat, but it was worse than the sour ciuds of Norway. Carts were set out with cranberries and other wild fruits. Before entering the town a little girl had brought us bramble-berries. A great many booths were stored with ropes and waggon-tackle, of which a supply may be had in all the towns, the execrable roads creating a heavy demand for traces, &c. Not far from the market-place stands the inn, which is better than that of most towns.

Mourom is said to have a history older than that of

Muscovy itself. It has been held successively by Tartars, Mordouins, Russians ; and those who would take time to explore its ancient cathedral and sixteen showy churches might still find some interesting monuments. These churches are nearly all of the Russian aspect and form : for we now perceive that the churches of this country differ little from each other. Except the great cathedrals of St. Petersburg or Moscow, they generally consist of a large parallelogram, with a great dome in the centre, by which light is admitted, and a small cupola, more or less elevated, at each of the four corners. A Grecian portico, or some other fancy, is occasionally added. What with whitewash on the walls, gilding on the dome, and pictures over the entrance, they are gaudy enough to please the most furious taste.

We crossed the Okka in a large boat, navigated by a rope stretching from side to side. This river rises far above, in the centre of the country, and pursues a course nearly as tortuous and as slow as the first half of the Volga itself. It is very wide, but the yellow sands of its banks are so rapidly filling up the bed, that the large barges, of which there were many in sight on their way down to Nishnei, are often seriously impeded in their voyage. Unfortunately, the sands, which thus injure the navigation of the river, appear to have lost a quality which would have compensated for these impediments—they no longer yield gold ; but there are still valuable mines of copper and iron near the river.

Rivers in Russia would need to be large when we do come upon them, for the traveller has far to wander before he sees one. We have now travelled some six

saw him, when it could be done quietly, pulling them by the long beard, and otherwise loading them with every indignity.

The appearance and manners of the people now change considerably. The round forehead and bright sparkling eye of the Tartar may be seen at every door. The men wear coarse cloth more frequently than skins; and the women display marvellously short velvet jackets, covered with embroidery, over showy petticoats. Some protect their hair with a large handkerchief of yellow silk, floating behind them in the breeze. In short, gaudy colours seem to be in great favour, even the poorest having at least a couple of stripes of showy trimming down the front of their kirtle.

The cottages, which have been nearly the same everywhere, are no longer *houses*, but huts or wigwams. They look, in fact, like large bee-hives, consisting of nothing but roof, in the shape of huge cones, covered with thatch, descending to the very ground. The apple-trees which surround them have a singularly black and blasted appearance. The climate would appear to be very unfavourable to fruit, for among a hundred trees we did not see half-a-dozen apples. The red berries of the mountain-ash, which is a favourite near the houses of the peasants in this and other districts, are the only ornaments of the orchard.

Large trees, except pines and firs, are as rare as ever. We must still complain, therefore, that nothing is to be seen equal to the stately growth of our English glades. Half-a-dozen old willows in a dell are the only trees of any size that we passed in the whole one hundred miles

from Moscow : in fact, the woods of Russia are far from cheerful to travel through. As already stated, the tinkling rill never enlivens them, and the song of the bird is equally mute. True, autumn is not the season of song, and therefore we could not expect to *hear* the tenants of the grove ; but we did not even *see* singing-birds of any kind. The grey wagtail is almost the only feathered creature that ever greets the eye : yet the Russians would seem to be fond of the society of birds, for in the villages, and even in the suburbs of large towns, we often see a wooden box, not much larger than the first, either nailed high on the gable of the cottage, or perched on a pole in the garden, for sparrows to build in.

CHAPTER XIV.

NISHNEI-NOVGOROD AND THE VOLGA.

First symptoms of the fair—Road miseries—Site and appearance of the City of NISHNEI—Population—Churches—The VOLGA—Its majestic size—Compared with other rivers—The Danube—The Thames—The Spey—Commerce—Fisheries—Character of the country at its mouth—Cholera first entered Europe by this river—Muddy hue of most continental rivers.

TWENTY-FOUR hours' travel from Mourom brought us within sight of the long-looked-for Nishnei, whose white walls and blue domes, as we approached, struggled so unfavourably against a watery sky, that the impressions produced by the first view of this most singular city were far from cheerful.

Bad as the roads had been the whole way, the last nine miles surpassed all that travellers have ever been dragged through. Meantime the symptoms of proximity to the fair had gradually been increasing; the different streams of traders and merchandise were all converging to their central point. The bands of Cossacks, stationed by way of police, in rude tents along the road, with their long lances glittering among the trees, had become more frequent; the trains of vehicles, too, and the crowds of wild eastern-looking men, in new and varied costumes, were every hour becoming more dense; till, at length, the crowding and turmoil surpassed all we had ever seen. Though

much, perhaps the greater part, of the goods are transported by water, yet there is an immense proportion both comes and leaves by land-carriage ; during the fair, therefore, the great avenue from the west is constantly crowded with waggons beyond number. In place of a train of them every two or three miles as hitherto, we had now line after line of them, without intermission, for miles, each creaking vehicle dragged by at least two, and sometimes four, huge bullocks. There were also long convoys of hurdles, of various shapes and sizes, drawn by beautiful horses.

In consequence of all this commotion, the wide road, or what ought to be road, latterly became one impassable, impracticable field of mud several feet deep : it took us five hours to get over as many miles. The scene was one of the most singular that could be seen. One driver would try this line—another, the one beside it ; so that the whole width was ploughed by deep furrows. For a time all would go well, till some treacherous slough would occur, and bring the long-following train to a dead stand. Whenever we came to a spot more clear of waggons, the scene looked something like the sea-beach after a storm, so thick and melancholy were the fragments of carts and carriages that had perished in this miry desert. The Cossacks were on the alert to maintain order ; but, on the whole, there was little occasion for their interference. The only squabble we had was when we got into a beaten track, and were met by an opposing file of fifty or sixty waggons, the leader of which would not stir an inch to the side, but thrust our solitary vehicle out of the way to struggle alone through the untried depths. When the

momentary altercation which this occasioned was over, silence again prevailed—scarce a word was spoken—we have never seen so much work performed with such small waste of breath. Both men and animals seemed wisely to have agreed that there was nothing for it but patience.

A few handfuls of the gold wasted on brick and plaster at St. Petersburg, mixed with this mud, would in a few weeks make it as hard and firm as the granite of Finland.

THE ancient and flourishing city of NISHNEI,—which, according to the Russian spelling, is *Nishnyi-Novgorod*—that is, “Lower” Novgorod—capital of an important government of the same name—stands on a fine triangular height, at the junction of the Okka and Volga, in $56^{\circ} 19' 40''$ north latitude, and $61^{\circ} 40' 34''$ east longitude. The situation is not only admirably adapted for commerce, but is at the same time so commanding, and so central in regard to Asiatic as well as European Russia, that Peter the Great, as appears from a plan which has been discovered in the imperial archives, at one time intended to make this the seat of the capital of his empire, instead of the mouths of the Neva.

To a population of eighteen thousand souls, this city contains no fewer than twenty-six churches of great size and beauty, a couple of monasteries, and a nunnery. It consists, properly speaking, of two divisions, one of which stretches along the face and at the foot of the high ground which forms the southern bank of the Okka. The principal part of the city, however, lies on the top of

this elevation, and is chiefly composed of three great streets, well paved, and displaying handsome houses, converging towards a wide irregular space in front of the Kremlin, which covers the lofty point of the triangle immediately overhanging the Volga. The subsidiary streets are neither very fine nor very numerous; but there is a beautiful terrace above the river last named. This terrace commands a wide plain of corn and forest land, stretching mysteriously away towards Asia, and presenting one of the most interesting and singular views to be seen from any city in Europe.

The public buildings of Nishnei are very elegant, and, with the whole town, have a look of freshness and solidity far beyond what is common in the provinces. Many improvements are now going on, which will give it an architectural splendour inferior only to that of the first cities in the empire. So far, however, is Russia behind every other country, that there is not a single regular hotel to be found in a place annually visited by many thousand strangers. It was not without difficulty that we obtained (in the upper town) a small filthy room or two, with a doubtful promise of beds, in a kind of rickety caravanserai, fronting to the grand square, and communicating, by wooden galleries behind, with a traktir's establishment, well stored with Russian fare.

The Kremlin, with its low-arched gates and jagged walls, is one of the most singular of these ancient structures now remaining in Russia. Its scattered knolls mingle in strange confusion with pepper-box cathedrals, a monument to the patriotic Mijnine and Pojarskoï, barracks and government buildings, all of which, at the moment

we entered them, were shaken to their very foundations by the loud music of a band at least one hundred strong. Singular as these structures are, however, they possess little interest compared with the indescribable views among which they rise. It is altogether one of the most striking and remarkable spots we have ever stood upon ; and would be so even without the picturesque churches and singular masses of buildings rising on every hand ; for it looks down on what so few spots command—two of the mightiest rivers in Europe, flowing so near, that it seems as if a pebble could be thrown into either from that lofty brow.

The VOLGA ! There is a mystery, a charm, in all mighty rivers, which has ever made us gaze upon them with an interest beyond that inspired by other great and glorious sights ; but to look on the largest of European rivers—the king of our fair tides and oft-sung streams—gave a thrill of joy surpassing all former pleasure of the kind. Those who know that the first glimpse of some great object which we have read or dreamt of from earliest recollection is ever a moment of intensest enjoyment, will forgive the foolish transport felt while first standing on that commanding height, and devouring the majestic stream that rolls in such gloomy grandeur below.

The demeanour of this river sovereign is worthy of a king. Leaving less powerful rivals to raise themselves into importance by fuming and brawling—secure in his might and uncontested dignity—he moves calmly but resistlessly on. There is no noise, no surge—the glassy tide lies as peaceful as a lake, and, on the first glance, from

its great breadth, bears some resemblance to one. The Volga at this point is 4600 feet wide—that is, more than four-and-a-half times the breadth of the Thames at Blackfriar's Bridge (995 feet), seven times that of the Seine at the Pont Royal, and (that our home friends may have some idea of the Volga) about twenty-six times the breadth of the Spey in its summer bed (182 feet) at Fochabers. The relative dignity of this mighty river, however, is best shown by dividing the Danube, for instance, into 100 parts, and then comparing the two together, when it will be found that the length of the Volga is as 130; while that of the Dnieper, is 72; of the Don, 69; of the Rhine, 49, &c. The Danube is the longest river that is entirely in Europe, its length being 1500 miles. The length of the Volga, even at the lowest estimate, is 2700 miles; but the latter part of its course is beyond the boundaries of Europe.

Smooth and silent as the Volga seems from the point above indicated, its strength is soon apparent from the slanting course which the broad skiffs are compelled to take. Many of them are crossing every moment, overcrowded with passengers. Looking up the river, both banks seem very flat; here, and for a short way below, the west bank is high; farther down both banks are very steep, confining the stream to a breadth of about two-thirds of a mile.

Many hundred boats and barges from the northern and central districts of Russia, as well as the countries bordering on the Caspian, line the nearest shore for more than a mile, but especially towards the mouth of the Okka, where they lie so thick as to impede the stream. The various

names of this motley craft are too difficult for the memory. Those from the side of Astrachan, termed *ladia*, *kayouki*, and *nosedî*, ships, barks, and rafts, are charged chiefly with dried fish, isinglass, and sturgeons' roe, or caviar (for an account of which see farther on, at Kharkoff). The greater part of all these valuable products is obtained from the river itself: for the Volga is not the king of European streams merely in regard to size, but is also their king in regard to wealth. In productiveness it is perhaps the first of all the rivers of the world. Every spring the thirty miles of fishing-ground between Astrachan and the Caspian are visited by such abundance of sturgeon, sterlet, carp, belugas, pike, salmon, shad, and seal, that twelve thousand fishermen flock from all quarters to share the spoil, which can scarcely be carried away in six thousand of the barks of the country. Without this river the Russians could not live. It is said to supply more than half of the fish consumed in the empire; and it needs not be stated that among the Russians, from their many Lents, fish is one of the articles of consumption in greatest demand. In fact, the fisheries of the Volga are the most valuable in the world, having been calculated to yield the fishermen a clear profit of 220,000*l.* In addition to the fishing-craft, the trade of the river annually employs five thousand vessels of other kinds, most of which, from the danger of the upward navigation, are broken up at Astracan.

Well, then, does this river deserve the name of "Volga," which, it is said, comes from the Sarmatian language, and signifies "great." It has sometimes been termed the "Scythian Nile," both from the wandering

habits of some of the tribes on its banks, and from the many branches into which it divides, as will be seen by glancing at the map. At Astracan, which corresponds to the Alexandria of its Egyptian godfather, it is still undivided; but soon after it branches into eight great divisions, and sixty-five minor streams. The principal arm is 750 yards wide. The Caspian, into which it flows, presents some unexplained phenomena, one of the most singular of which is the changes that take place in the height of its surface. Its present level seems to be more than three hundred feet below that of the neighbouring sea of Azoff; but levellings made even by the same individuals—especially those of Professor Parrot—having given contradictory results, the emperor has recently empowered the Academy of sciences of St. Petersburg, to send a committee of their number to conduct a new survey in the most careful manner.

Many of the barks bring up cochineal, velvet, fruits, liquorice, soda, hides, and seeds. Their return cargoes are cloths, drugs, dye-stuffs, carpets, oil, &c. There was a small steamer lying amongst them, of which we had previously heard, and had at one time contemplated descending the Volga in it. For though the shores of the Caspian do not present the beauty and fertility of more favoured lands, yet we had a great desire to see a country where, in place of verdure, whole regions are covered with salt—where the soil, the lakes, the rivers, the rain, the very dew, the atmosphere itself, are all impregnated with the briny matter—where, if Potocki speaks truth, ships may be seen lying high and dry nearly fifty miles from the sea—blown thither when the waves

have been forced inland by particular states of the wind, and left helpless when these withdrew—where, according to Pallas and Gmelin, men look like obelisks, low bushes wave in the breeze like mighty trees driven across the plain by the whirlwind, and camels at a distance resemble mountains dancing a saraband; all arising from some optical deception peculiar to these Steppes, by which the range of vision is singularly extended, and every object magnified to unnatural bulk. We should like, too, to have seen the rare flowers which spring up beneath the breath of summer in the more favoured spots, especially its thousands of the great rose-coloured water-lily, rearing its leaves like broad shields to protect the waters from the sun, and sending up those richly-scented flowers, so dear to the Hindoos from a belief that their deities are embodied in them after death. We were compelled, however, to abandon the wish to see these and other rare sights, on learning that the navigation of the Volga is so precarious, that the steamer was as likely to take three months as three weeks to the voyage.

High as was the gratification felt in beholding the Volga, there was something of melancholy mingled with our joy. Standing on its banks, it was impossible to forget that these waters first brought to Europe one of the most fearful scourges by which it has ever been visited. The cholera, which had appeared in India only fourteen years before, was brought to Europe in 1831, by the boats ascending this river to the fair of Nishnei. Its first appearance here created an alarm which it were impossible to describe. Every precaution was used to

keep it from spreading; but precautions were vain. The people fled in terror, and in flying spread wider the disease which, as it had been assigned no mean path by which to invade us, so was it also commissioned not to pause in its devastations till it had humbled the proudest cities of Europe. There was something sadly in harmony with these reminiscences the first time we looked on the Volga. We had hurried to it immediately on our arrival; but from the state of the atmosphere little could be seen on the other side of the river, except a few low bushes close to the shore. The whole sky was apparently one mass of water, floating on the very surface of the ground, and held together by so slight a cohesion, that it every moment seemed about to burst in fury on the gloomy scene. It was oppressive to gaze at such a cheerless watery prospect.

But what wonders can sunshine achieve! The next time we looked on the Volga from the same spot, all gloom had fled from the landscape. The air was dry and warm—every cloud had disappeared—a brilliant sun lighted up one of the widest and most singular views that ever eye beheld. The country beyond the river, towards Asia, is so perfectly flat, that not a single undulation is to be seen in the whole horizon. The immense stretch of ground thus embraced from the heights of Nishnei is chiefly covered with forests; but there are some villages, with their white churches peeping out, and patches of corn-land around them. Looking northwards, the flat banks appear to be covered with woods of the same sombre character. To the south, much sand is seen on the opposite bank, which is also flat.

The ridge on which Nishnei stands continues lofty as far as the eye can go: though not rocky, yet from its height it forms a noble barrier against the insidious tide. This ridge ought to have been the boundary of an empire.

The Volga has little of the muddy colour which pollutes nearly all the rivers of the continent. The Tiber is not the only "yellow" stream that travellers have to muse upon. The poet's epithet may be literally applied to the Elbe, the Saal, the Rhine, the classic Po, and the prosaic Seine. Notwithstanding Byron's just tribute to its parent lake—the Lemman blue—

" That mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue,"

even the Rhone itself is as muddy as any of them all, throughout the whole of its course below Lyons. In fact, a *clear* stream is a sight which one longs for in vain in any part of southern Europe; and the eye, therefore, after being long confined, as ours had been, to discoloured waves, gazes with redoubled charm on such limpid waters as now rolled beneath us.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAIR OF NISHNEI-NOVGOROD.

Site of the fair—Shops—Police arrangements—Description of the crowd—Singular groups—Chinese, Turks, Persians, English, &c.—Contrasted with the great Leipsic fair—Numbers attending—Goods sold—Their value—Morocco leather—Silks—Jewels—Teas—Mode of procuring them—Superior to those brought to England—Reason of this—The Countess and her gown—Cashmere shawls—How they are manufactured—Russian horse-shoeing—Visit to an eating-house—The patron saint—Advantages of this situation—Imperfect commercial system—Mode of effecting payments—Political considerations—The Emperor and the Asiatic tribes.

“BUT the FAIR!” exclaims some impatient reader. “Here are whole pages about Nishnei and its rivers, but still not a word about that which chiefly lured you so far out of the way.” Nor does this impatience surprise us; for, What has become of the Fair?—was the very question which we ourselves had been putting ever since we entered the place. After passing the gates not a single symptom of it had we seen.

Turn this way, however: from the Volga and Asia look in another direction—across the Okka—and there, on a low, almost inundated flat, exposed to the waters of both these rivers, lies a scene of bustle and activity unparalleled in Europe. A vast town of shops, laid out in regular streets, with churches, hospitals, barracks, and theatres, now tenanted by more than a hundred thousand souls, but in a few weeks to be as dead and silent as the

forests we have been surveying : for when the fair is over not a creature will be seen out of the town, on the spot which is now swarming with human beings. Yet these shops are not the frail structures of canvas and rope with which the idea of a fair is associated in other countries. They are regular houses, built of the most substantial materials, and are generally one story high, with large shops in the front part, and sleeping-rooms for the merchant and his servants behind. Sewers, and other means of maintaining cleanliness and health, are provided more extensively even than in the regular towns of Russia.

The business of the fair is of such importance, that the governor of the province, the representative of the emperor himself, takes up his residence in it during the greater part of the autumn. There is a large and handsome palace built for him in the centre, accommodating a train of secretaries and clerks numerous enough to manage the revenues of a kingdom. Strong posts of military are planted all round to keep down rioting, and the Cossack policemen are always on the alert against thieves, who, notwithstanding, continue to reap a good harvest from the unwary.

The first view of this scene from the heights of the Kremlin is very imposing ; nor was the interest diminished by the repeated visits which we made to it during the three or four days spent in its neighbourhood. The fair may be about a mile from the centre of the city, but much less from the outskirts, to which, in fact, it is united by a long wide bridge of boats across the two arms of the Okka, and a line of good houses along the

steep and difficult slope leading to the bank of that river. This slanting street is filled with a countless throng from morning to night—carriages, waggons, droschkies, pedestrians, uniting to form the only scene out of England, except, perhaps, the Toledo of Naples, that can be at all compared to the crowds of Ludgate-hill or Cheapside. The crowd becomes, if possible, greater when we reach the river, the branches of which, all round the bridge, wide as they are, can scarcely hold the many barges of every shape and tonnage either discharging or taking in their cargoes. The shops in the nearer streets of the fair receive the goods at once from the river; for the more remote ones there are canals which the barges penetrate.

Immediately on leaving the bridge the fair-ground begins. This part is always crowded with labourers looking out for employment, and Cossacks planted among them to maintain order. Then come lines of temporary booths, displaying objects of inferior value for the lower classes, such as beads, trinkets, and some articles of dress, especially caps. Of these last a great variety is displayed—round turbans of short curly wool from Astracan (here called crimmels, because the best is furnished by the lamb of the large-tailed sheep imported from Crim Tartary)—high black Kirghis bonnets made of wool resembling hair—and flat gold-figured cowls from Kasan. These booths stand in front of coffee, or rather tea-rooms, laid out with little tables, and eating-houses large enough for two or three hundred to dine in with comfort, and at any price, from two pence to two pounds.

This being the great entrance to the fair, it is always the most crowded part of it, and, consequently, to the stranger, the most interesting. If he can secure room for a moment beneath the projecting roof of some booth—no easy matter where so many thousands are boiling along like the bubbles of a whirlpool—he will here see costumes and faces more varied and more strange than ever before were assembled in so small a compass. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the crowd does not present the gaudy look of an ordinary fair. The ribbons and the lace, the gay bonnets and (greatest loss of all) the red cheeks are not here. The mirth, the dance, and the brawl, too, are wanting, as well as the drums and the showmen. For this is not an idle, holiday meeting, but a place of business. The Nishnei buyers are not country bumpkins with only a few shillings in their pockets, but rich merchants and grave bankers, who have here their whole fortunes at stake. This fact, however, only renders the scene more worthy of the survey on which the reader has been invited to accompany us.

First advances a white-faced, flat-nosed merchant from Archangel, come here with his furs. He is followed by a bronzed, long-eared Chinese, who has got rid of his tea, and is now moving towards the city, to learn something of European life before setting out on his many months' journey home. Next come a pair of Tartars from the Five Mountains, followed by a youth whose regular features speak of Circassian blood. Those with muslins on their arms, and bundles on their backs, are Tartar pedlars. Cossacks, who have brought hides from the Ukraine, are gazing in wonder on their brethren who

have come with caviar from the Akhtuba. Those who follow, by their flowing robes and dark hair, must be from Persia: to them the Russians owe their perfumes. The man in difficulty about his passport, is a Kujur from Astrabad, applying for aid to a Turcoman from the northern bank of the Gourgan. The wild-looking Bashkir from the Ural has his thoughts among the hives of his cottage, to which he would fain be back; and the stalwart Kuzzilbash from Orenburg looks as if he would gladly bear him company, for he would rather be listening to the scream of his eagle in the chase than to the roar of this sea of tongues.

Glancing in another direction, yonder simpering Greek from Moldavia, with the rosary in his fingers, is in treaty with a Kalmuck as wild as the horses he was bred amongst. Here comes a Truchman craving payment from his neighbour Ghilan (of Western Persia), and a thoughtless Bucharian is greeting some Agriskhan acquaintance (sprung of the mixed blood of Hindoos and Tartars). Nogaïs are mingling with Kirghisians, and drapers from Paris are bargaining for the shawls of Cashmere with a member of some Asiatic tribe of unpronounceable name. Jews from Brody are settling accounts with Turks from Trebizond; and a costume-painter from Berlin is walking arm-in-arm with the player from St. Petersburg, who is to perform Hamlet in the evening.

In short, cotton merchants from Manchester, jewellers from Augsburg, watchmakers from Neufchâtel, wine-merchants from Frankfort, leech-buyers from Hamburgh, grocers from Königsberg, amber-dealers from Memel,

pipe-makers from Dresden, and furriers from Warsaw, help to make up a crowd the most motley and most singular that the wonder-working genius of commerce ever drew together.

As most of the Oriental dealers who frequent the fair belong to tribes which are in constant intercourse with the Russians of the south, there is not such a diversity of garb as might be expected from the variety of tongues assembled. The long robe of Russia, as a compromise between the loose folds of the east and the scanty skirts of Europe, is worn by a great majority.

There are Russians, of course, from every corner of the empire ; but the greater part of the crowd, we were assured, and certainly the most singular, consists of dealers belonging to tribes of Central Asia, whose names we never heard before, and will not pretend to repeat : this, in fact, is the great point of union between Europe and Asia, which here make an exchange of their respective commodities. There is no spot in the world, perhaps, where so many meet belonging to the different divisions of the globe. The number of Mahomedans is so great, that a handsome mosque has been built for them at the end of the fair, in which worship is performed as regularly as in their native cities.

Singular, however, as this crowd is, yet, as already hinted, it almost entirely wants one interesting ingredient—women : the consequence is, that it has, on the whole, a dull and cheerless look. What life and gaudy variety would it present were each Asian to bring his dark-eyed, wondering bride along with him ; but Oriental jealousy forbids such a journey among the lawless sons of the

west. The busily occupied character of the throng is also noticeable : if-talking, every man is talking on business ; if alone, he is plunged in thought—hurrying on as if winter were at hand, and would scarcely allow him sunshine enough to get his harvest gathered in.

This fair is altogether such a scene as would require the highest descriptive powers to do it justice. The only thing of the kind to which it can be at all compared is the great fair of Leipsic. Having been present at that famed congress of German industry only eleven months before, its lively sights were fresh enough in our remembrance to justify us in contrasting the two ; and we have no hesitation in saying that Nishnei far surpasses it in every way. At *first*, perhaps, there is a feeling of disappointment on coming here ; but let any one who has been to Nishnei think of it twelve months or twelve years after, and say whether it be not a sight that furnishes more to meditate upon than any similar scene he has ever witnessed. Leipsic has a livelier—more gaudy look ; but this is owing to the great intermixture of females in the crowd : all the beauty of a city, where beauty is not rare, comes to the aid of the trading populace. The German fair gains also from being held in the picturesque, old-fashioned streets of one of the most interesting cities in Europe, which boasts of houses as lofty as those of the old town of Edinburgh, and is surrounded by beautiful walks and scenes of historic and literary interest on every side. Poor Nishnei, on the contrary, is thrust away here, out of the world, to a spot that nobody ever heard of—a swampy point, which two rivers threaten to drown every day in the year, with no-

thing round it but dreary forests and watery plains, so endless, that the eye wearies in measuring them.

Yet, in spite of all the difficulties it has to struggle against, this is a much more marvellous sight than Leipsic. In place of temporary booths, filled with German toys and Tyrolese guitars, we have here substantial, well-stored shops, groaning with articles at once the most costly and the most essential to human existence. We have not forgotten that the most important part of the Leipsic business is not transacted out-of-doors, but in the vast magazines with which the best streets are filled: yet let the contents of every wareroom and every booth in Leipsic be turned out to the pavement, and we venture to say that the goods brought to Nishnei in one year far surpass in value those brought to its rival in two.

There is a short way, however, of settling the relative importance of these great marts—namely, by a reference to the amount of sales in Nishnei and Leipsic. Schnitzler and the other authorities state the annual value of goods sold here at 125,000,000 roubles, or 5,000,000*l.*; but we were assured by a gentleman filling a high situation, that this is only the official value given in to government by the merchants, which always falls short of the real value sold. “It is notorious,” he says, “that, in order to escape the payment of part of the duties, the merchants never give the true value of their stock.” There has also been a great increase since the time to which this statement relates; so that the real amount of money turned over in the place may now be fairly estimated at 300,000,000 roubles, or TWELVE MILLIONS

STERLING!—Such, at least, was the statement made to us on the spot. . . . Leipzig, on the other hand, even putting the spring and autumn fairs together, does not sell one-half of this value. But the relative importance of the two places may also be known from the numbers who attend them. In Leipzig there are seldom more than 40,000 strangers: Nishnei, as we were assured on good authority, is annually frequented by the enormous number of 250,000 in the course of the two months of the fair. Some even rate the number much higher, especially Erdmann, who states it at 600,000, an estimate which Schnitzler very justly rejects as exaggerated, though his own estimate of 200,000 would appear to be too low.

In one respect Nishnei differs most completely from Leipzig—in the total absence of anything literary from its stores. Leipzig is essentially a literary fair, or rather it is *the* literary fair of Europe: for, besides the 6000 or 8000 new books which appear every Easter, you may find there 600,000 or 800,000 *old* ones—all that have been written since the world began. But the Emperor of Russia has more sense than to send his people all this way for such idle stuff: he gives them plenty of warm clothes for the back, and good things for the belly, and allows the *mind* to remain—where it was. We did not see a single bookshop in the whole place. Everything made by hands or produced by earth and sea was here, except the pestilent productions of the pen and the press.

The great fairs of Frankfort-on-the-Main cannot in any way be compared to that of Nishnei: they have still

the reputation of being gay and attractive scenes, but are inferior to those of Leipsic. Even in the sixteenth century, when they were the talk and wonder of all Europe, they were not attended by more than forty thousand strangers—a mere drop in the bucket compared with the oceans of Nishnei.

But the reader will by this time be accusing us of unpoliteness: we had forgot that he has been kept standing, without permission, at the edge of a poor huckster's booth all the while that we have been talking of Germany, and discussing statistics with that dry but most useful man, Monsieur Schnitzler, who tells a great deal more about the place than we have patience for, and gives a plan of it into the bargain. We shall now atone, however, for our want of civility, by taking the reader on a walk through the fair. Not that we shall lead him into every shop, or even every street—he would be tired before we had got half through. We shall take only a flying glance.

But there is a sad obstacle in our way at the very outset. We have no sooner left the dry bit by the bridge than the streets are found full of that commodity which is decidedly the most abundant of all Russian commodities—mud: one might as well think to walk through a street of tar as through these creeping eddies, where the furrows of straggling wheels close almost immediately after them.

“*Courage, monsieur!*” exclaims some light-hearted Gaul from the crowd; “*un petit peu de courage, s’il vous plait; autrement*” . . . The *autrement* presented too serious an alternative to permit of hesitation: so let us

do as others are doing—the mud won't reach much higher than the knee, and in case we actually stick midway, there is help at hand to drag us out before we can be run over by any of the thousand vehicles constantly in motion. Besides, is not the emperor coming here in a day or two to see the fair? and are not the people very glad that all this rain has fallen just at the best moment for letting him see Nishnei in its worst state? He will be shamed into generosity: he cannot but do something to improve the streets through which, in their present state, even his fiery horses will scarcely be able to pull him.

The streets of this city of shops are as regular and as wide as those of the new town of Edinburgh. The cross ones are about the same length as the lines from Princes-street to Queen-street: the main ones, probably three times as long. Their number, as well as the magnitude of the business done here, may be estimated from the fact, that the rents drawn from them for the very short period of the fair amount to EIGHTEEN THOUSAND pounds (445,000 roubles). One quarter goes by the name of the *wooden shops*; but the principal divisions are all built of stone. Most of the streets have elegant light arcades on each side, supported in front by thousands of cast-iron columns, where purchasers can walk about, well sheltered in all kinds of weather, to view the tempting displays in the windows. The shops are generally very handsome, and in some instances extend from street to street, so as to have two fronts. They present nothing of the confusion of a fair: the goods of every kind are as neatly ranged as in a city.

An enumeration of all the articles exposed for sale would be impossible—there is literally nothing wanting,

from the heaviest articles of commerce to the very lightest—from cathedral bells to ostrich-feathers. A great deal of space is taken up by the more bulky articles, made in the country, such as ropes, wooden implements, domestic and agricultural—nails, door-bands, &c. ; raw hides, hats, winter-boots, with furs, and all the commonest kinds of clothing. To facilitate business, there is a separate quarter set apart for each different kind of the more important descriptions of goods. One quarter contains *groceries*, of which the value sold is very great. In another, *fish* and *caviar* are exposed in most fragrant variety: of these, about sixty thousand pounds worth are sold at each fair. A third quarter contains *leather* articles of every kind, which may be bought surprisingly cheap, but, in particular, boots and shoes, here disposed of ready-made in great quantities. *Morocco leather*, for which Russia is so famous, is also sold wholesale to a very large amount: a great deal of it comes from Astracan, where, as in other parts of European Russia, goats are kept, for the sake of their hides to make this leather with, more than for their milk or flesh. The agreeable *soap* of Kasan is sold to a large value. *Iron* articles from Toulâ, and glittering arms of every description, occupy a conspicuous share of the streets. The *cloth* range is also large and well stocked: the value of woollen goods, Russian and foreign, sold annually, is seldom less than 3,000,000 of roubles (120,000*l.*). But one of the most curious of all is the *tea* quarter, which occupies the greater part of an immense division, standing by itself. This is one of the most singular corners, not only from the number of

Chinese seen in it, but also from the great amount of cash turned over by them. The chests are all sewed into tough skins. One quarter contains ready-made clothes of all descriptions: the cloaks, both for men and women, are made from stuffs with the most singular patterns. Some of the figured works from Asia are really very beautiful.

The quarter for fancy articles—gloves, handkerchiefs, ribbons, canes, &c.—is always crowded with purchasers, attracted by the graces of the fair occupants from the *Rue St. Honoré*. The division for *wines* is not very large. That for *cotton* goods appeared to be very valuably stocked. Most of the articles had an English look; but among the thousands of dealers assembled here from all other towns we met with only one countryman. Of cotton goods, Russian and foreign, the value sold generally averages twenty-two millions of roubles (£880,000).

The gaudiest display of all is among the numerous shops for *silks* and *shawls*. Most of these articles being of Oriental manufacture, the patterns far outshine even the waistcoats of our modern beaux. The manufactured silks here disposed of every year are estimated at ten millions and a half of roubles (420,000*l.*)—while of raw silk 308,000 lbs. are sold. Nothing surprised us more, however, than the *furniture-shops*—costly tables, chairs, sofas, all the heaviest articles of furniture, brought in safety to such a distance, and over such roads, were what we did not expect to meet, even in this universal emporium. Large *mirrors*, too, from France as well as St. Petersburg, and *crystal* articles from Bohemia, were displayed in great profusion; and many a longing eye

might be seen near the windows of the *jewellers* and *silversmiths*, who are said to do a great deal of business, not only in selling their home-made articles, but also in buying jewels brought from Asia.

We made several purchases in the course of our rambles ; and, though the wholesale trade be the great object of attention, we were always welcomed, even with our petty demands. The old Russian leaven clings to all the dealers, for they invariably asked more than the just price ; but the Russian by whom we were accompanied had also *his* price, and they never allowed us to go away without making a bargain.

Even for an article of such constant demand as tea they had two prices. On asking whether it was of good quality, they told us that bad tea is unknown in Russia ; and the fact is easily accounted for. The supply of this article comes direct from the tea-growing districts of China, and through channels where there are no other competitors to create an unusual or unforeseen demand. Good teas *may* be sent to England, but, without any fault on the part of our own merchants, they may just as frequently be bad ; for it is now well known that there is a regular *manufactory* of teas at Canton, where other leaves are substituted for those of the real plant. The substitution of other leaves not noxious to life would be little, were it not proved that substances the most deleterious are also employed in some parts of the process. The official statement on this subject, published in England by one of the tea-inspectors, is well known ; and from it we learn that, at the time when the remission of the tea-duties in the United States had occasioned a greater

demand for teas at Canton than it was possible to supply in the usual way, the author of the statement referred to obtained admission to a place where he found people not only preparing the false leaves, but making *green* tea out of damaged *black*, or what was supposed to be such. And by what means was this metamorphosis accomplished? Simply by mixing them in iron pans with turmeric, Prussian blue, and gypsum! Wonder, after this, that people in England should have headaches and spasms on drinking poisoned leaves. The smallness of the quantity brought to Russia may also account for the purity of their teas. Nishnei is not the only mart in the empire, but it is the greatest; yet, after many inquiries, we could not ascertain that more than forty thousand chests are sold here every year, while the annual export for Great Britain from Canton, in 1833-4, was 325,307 chests, and for several years preceding had seldom been less than three hundred thousand.

The town at which the teas are purchased by the Russians, on the frontier of China, is called Kiakhla. It is a very insignificant place, no more than fifty Russians being required to manage the trade. Separated from it by a small brook stands the Chinese town of Maimai, inhabited by only two or three hundred traders, who suffice for all the transactions between the two greatest empires in the world.

While making our rounds in the fair, every merchant had complaints to utter about the dulness of trade; and no small share of the blame was laid on the weather and the emperor—on the one for spoiling the roads, and on the other for not having long since made them better.

The *ladies* of Nishnei, however, were not among the grumblers—they thanked their stars that the things which *they* most needed had all arrived before the bad weather set in. They can buy here many articles of French and English manufacture nearly as cheap as in Paris. The amiable and lively Countess de —— summed up the merits of the fair with an illustration which, though a feminine one, is as good as a dozen of arguments from a political economist: “My daughter and I have been to the fair, as you may see by our handsome silk *batiste* gowns, which you have been in love with all the evening. How much did they cost, think you? just twenty-pence a yard. Now, without being *very* old, I can recollect the time when it would have cost three times as much; or rather, here, at the ends of the earth, we could not have got such a pretty article at all. We Russian ladies ruined our husbands in velvets and other costly dresses, which alone were worn by people of rank; for, except the coarse stuffs of the country, nothing else was to be got. But now that our fair has become known, Russian husbands will get rich on our savings, and we poor folks can dress as decently, and nearly as cheaply, as other Christians.”

This was nothing more than the truth. Thanks to the fair, the stranger who enters a noble drawing-room at Nishnei will find little to remind him that he is some thousand miles away from the *Faubourg St. Germain*. So far as the ladies are concerned, the resemblance in grace, manners, language, is complete; while the furniture and general arrangements really differ but little, the

pendules, ottomans, *bergères*, mirrors, being all precisely as in a French *salon*.

Of all who frequent Nishnei, few are more welcome to the Russian dames than the vendors of the shawls of Cashmere, a great portion of which also reach the shoulders of the beauties of St. James's and the Tuileries. They are generally brought to the fair by Persians, who also supply other articles of the female toilette. Some of the shawls are sold at 10*l.*, and some as high as 50*l.*; but of the whole number brought here, it is impossible that one-half can be genuine. We could not obtain any correct statement of the number sold, but even the lowest estimate would compel us to believe that these shawls have the power of multiplying themselves on their way from India: for it appears that, in the romantic Cashmere itself, not more than eighty thousand shawls are manufactured in a year; the number of looms, which, two hundred years ago, amounted to forty thousand, now scarcely reaching sixteen thousand. There are still almost sixty thousand persons employed in the weaving, each loom requiring at least two persons, and, for superior kinds, four. The shawls are made from the fleece of a goat known as "the shawl-goat of Cashmere," which, by all accounts, is confined to one particular region, having never been found to thrive out of the narrow range which nature has assigned it. This animal is found at a considerable height on the Himalaya mountains; and, what is most singular, it flourishes only on the *northern* face, being found to degenerate the moment it is transplanted to the south side. It is very diminutive and ugly. There

is an inferior variety of it, known as the "Angora goat," from whose fleece, it is asserted, are made a great many of the shawls sold at Nishnei and elsewhere as genuine Cashmeres.

On leaving the shops and their attractive contents, we found an interesting sight of another kind at the outpost, where a colony of carpenters and blacksmiths is stationed, for doctoring broken-down carts, and shoeing horses. Such a scene of wreck and confusion has seldom been witnessed. Their mode of shoeing horses is more cruel even than that practised along the Rhine, and in other parts of Germany. Outside the farrier's door strong posts are fixed, with huge straps and pulleys attached. The poor horse is wheedled into this treacherous cradle, and, before he knows what is about to befall him, the straps and ropes are crossed below his belly, the wheel is turned, and lo! in one moment he hangs in the air as helpless as a bale of wool. Other straps are fastened in some way or other about his flanks, in such fashion that he cannot move a limb; and his cowardly assailants, one seizing a fore and the other a hind foot, proceed to shoe him with as little ceremony as if he had neither heels to kick nor teeth to bite with.

We might next visit the splendid apartments where, as already stated, the governor and other high authorities are constantly sitting—the hospitals, always open in case of accidents—the Russian, Armenian, and other churches; or we might walk to the part where long lines of trucks and waggons are kept constantly harnessed for removing goods—the station for empty carts—the place where the washing is carried on—the rag-

market—the corner where potass is sold—the Tartar eating-houses—each and all of which are highly interesting; but we have need of rest, and cannot do better than step into one of the large *traktirs*, or tea-houses, which, now that evening is come, will be found full to overflowing.

The scenes presented in one of these *traktirs* (“eating and tea-houses” is the best English name for them) in the fair of Nishnei are among the most singular in the world. The merchant here banishes care after the toils of the day. Wrinkles forsake his brow as he inhales the refreshing aroma of his favourite leaf, and talks over the events of the fair with his neighbour. Notwithstanding the immense crowd in these places, the attendance is excellent, there being bands of active long-bearded waiters, all clad in flowing white cotton from neck to heel. The tables are covered with white napkins, and on the centre of each stands a slop-basin, indicating that tea is the most general fare of the place. Many, however, order soup, fish, or a kind of peas-pudding which seems to be in great favour. Tea is taken so strong, that, on inspecting the pot prepared for our party, it was found quite full of fresh leaves. Though the waiters understood very well what was meant by *cognac*, so little is milk in use, that here, as in other places, they could not comprehend us at all when we asked for that English addition to the beverage.

The crowd of idlers seldom remain in these places, or even in the streets, later than nine. On leaving to go home, we were surprised to find so few of them walking towards the city; but the smallness of the numbers seen

moving across the river arose from the arrangements, which prohibit all persons coming here on business being allowed to lodge in the town. The consequence is, that, while the plain below is a scene of unexampled activity, a great part of Nishnei itself remains as tranquil as ever, there being nobody in its streets but a few old women selling bilberries and tripe to some idle soldiers, or answering the impertinences of still more idle travellers like ourselves. Visitors who are not merchants have alone the privilege of living in the city. This arrangement is adopted by the police, in order to preserve a more efficient control over so many strangers. The merchants and their assistants all sleep in the rooms attached to their shops, or in the villages not far from the fair-ground. Many labourers are sheltered among the barks in the rivers.

But though the town does not gain much by lodging strangers, almost every family in it depends more or less on the fair, some out of each household being employed about it as inspectors, tax-gatherers, secretaries of police, &c. This employment, however, does not last long; the fair, strictly speaking, continuing only from the 1st of July to the 1st of September, old style.

This great meeting is still known among the Russians as the "fair of Makarieff," being so called from St. Macarius, under whose protection it is held, and who also gives his name to the place in which it formerly stood—a decaying town in the same government on the opposite bank of the Volga, and fifty-six miles distant.

As it would be impossible for anything to go on in Russia without some superstitious mummary, a grand af-

fair was got up by the priests of Makarieff, on the birthday of the patron saint (8th of August)—said to be by far the best day for a stranger to be here—when the picture of the holy man is brought up the Volga, and paraded with immense ceremony. On this occasion a rich harvest of offerings is reaped from the faithful—the only thing the priests have to make up for the great loss which they and their town, with its monks, have sustained by the removal of the fair.

The old situation having been found unsuited to the increasing commerce, the site was changed in 1817; and the spot on which the fair is now held is undoubtedly the fittest to be found in Europe for such a purpose. The two rivers at whose junction it stands not only rank among the largest in our division of the globe, but are both of them navigable to a great distance, and one, in particular, is of importance in a commercial point of view, from its being now, by canals, in communication both with the north of Europe and with some of the finest provinces of Asia. Great as is the quantity of goods transported by land, it bears no proportion to the cargoes conveyed by the countless armament, already alluded to, floating on every side; most of them hulks, averaging from forty to one hundred tons burden, besides the steam-boats and ships of greater size in the Volga. Compared with all this, the extent of shipping was most trifling when the fair was first planted here. But of the many proofs that can be brought in favour of the new site, none is more striking than that furnished by the great increase in the business of the fair. Not many years ago the sales at Makarieff did not exceed

the value of fifty millions of roubles ; now, as we have seen, even by the official valuation, it is much more than double. The sales, even in 1832, an unfavourable year, were valued at 123,000,000, of which 89,500,000 were for goods belonging to European Russia, 16,700,000 for Asiatic goods, and 17,000,000 for foreign articles.

Notwithstanding its proximity to the rivers, the site is not considered unhealthy ; and measures are in progress for still further promoting the salubrity of the place. The danger from inundation is now greatly diminished by strong embankments. The town of Nishnei stands high, above all chance of inundation, and is looked upon as one of the healthiest spots in Russia. The soil is so dry, that the effects of rain disappear very quickly : to this we can ourselves testify, our dreadful roads having become almost dry during a very brief cessation of the rain. The route from Moscow, which we found so formidable, is, in fine weather, one of the best in Europe.

So far from being a proof of a thriving state of commerce throughout the empire generally, the extent of business transacted here only shows how far Russia is behind other countries. The fair-system is resorted to solely by countries of which the commerce is comparatively in its infancy. It answers well for a time, but gradually disappears with the extension of commercial credit, and the establishment of regular communications between the remote parts of a kingdom. England had her miscellaneous fairs until a very late period, and Scotland had hers not twenty years since ; but they have now almost entirely disappeared from both countries. They still continue in many foreign countries besides Russia, as

in Germany, at Leipsic, &c., and in France, at Beaucaire. But of late years even these long-frequented marts have also begun to decline, and ere long will disappear altogether.

We had imagined that the barter system had prevailed here to a great extent, but find that it is seldom resorted to, payments being generally effected by means of a government bank, established expressly for the fair.

Before leaving this interesting place, we may state that, with his characteristic attention to the minutest circumstance which may tend, even in the most distant manner, to advance the political interests of Russia, the Emperor Nicholas has availed himself of the annual presence of so many Chinese traders at Nishnei to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with the geography of that country, as well as with the manners and language of the people. Further to aid in this scheme, he has recently established a professorship of Chinese in the university of Kasan, and holds out great encouragement to all who attempt to enter the well-guarded empire. Even although political ends should not be advanced by the intercourse between Europe and the east opened up at Nishnei, there can be little doubt that the visits of so many traders from the distant parts of Asia will be of great consequence to science and discovery; for, through the agency of these strangers, the Russian government hopes to obtain some information about those wide regions in central Asia of which Europeans as yet know almost nothing; and with this view it has repeatedly sent men of science to accompany the returning caravans as far as possible. The

result of these expeditions has not yet been made public ; but it is whispered that they have not been altogether fruitless, and it was said that more than one Russian of high qualifications was to leave in 1836, to advance as far at least as the frontier of China, and try to become better acquainted with the territories laid down in our maps under the general name of " Tartary," but of which, as yet, very little is really known to Europeans. Caravans from some parts of this unexplored tract occasionally visit the English possessions in India, and have lately brought down most singular books, in bindings an inch thick, and written in a character altogether unknown in other parts of the east ; and the report of this is doubtless stimulating Russia to be the first, if possible, to make the world acquainted with this interesting field. Tobolsk, in Siberia, is still the great place of rendezvous for all going from Russia to Kiakhta, on the Chinese frontier ; but passages also appear to have been accomplished lower down.

CHAPTER XVI.

GAIETIES AND GRAVITIES ON THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA.

The governor of Nishnei—Singular military show — Government of Nizhegorod—Our inn—Hint to the traveller—Native fare—State of education in the provinces — Average proportion of education in Russia, contrasted with that of Great Britain—Russian mode of reckoning—The abacus—Tourists in Russia—Analysis of a party of foreigners, Germans, English, &c.—Marvels of modern travelling—Shakspeare and Monsieur Scribe on the banks of the Volga — A gifted Othello—Russian Desdemona.

OUR recollections of Nishnei would have been of a far less agreeable nature, had we not, during our three or four days' sojourn there, been honoured with the attention of General Boutanieff, governor of the province, whose soldier-like appearance, and the ten medals or crosses on his breast, tell that his fifty years (for such may be his age) have not all been spent at home. It is seldom that any governor in Russia can be said to hold a sinecure ; but least of all will this be said of the governor of Nishnei. During the fair his duties are literally of the most harassing nature ; except for the hour or two when he comes to town to dine with his family, he is night and day at head-quarters in the fair. The impending visit of the emperor having also created a great deal of additional work, we felt doubly grateful that he should have taken time to show us any kindness.

From the balcony of the general's house in the city we one evening witnessed a very singular military show. All the troops in the government having been drawn to the town to prepare for the emperor, a grand review had been held in the afternoon outside the gates. From this the men were now returning in high order, and though the number was not great for Russia—only a few thousands—yet the immense variety of the uniforms made the sight extremely interesting to a stranger, who might never have another opportunity of seeing specimens of nearly all the different kinds of troops in the Russian army assembled together at one time. There were at least one hundred different uniforms displayed. The appearance of all the men was most soldierly, but none looked better than a troop in which alone no fewer than eighty-four different uniforms were exhibited. It was composed of subalterns, all handsome men; and, notwithstanding the great variety of colour and ornament, the effect was splendid. The governor being with us at the window, but merely as a spectator, he spoke familiarly down to the officers as they passed; and always as he saw a company come up, he greeted the men with a friendly “good evening, carabineers!” “Good evening, guards!” “good evening, veterans!” “Good evening, grenadiers!” &c. and was answered by the whole body with “I wish you good health,” or “I salute you, governor.” The veterans had nearly all been disbanded, and many of them were, strictly speaking, no longer liable to serve, but they were so delighted at the opportunity of once more appearing before the emperor, that many had come a long way to entreat to be allowed to bear arms during his visit. Every

old trooper in the town and neighbourhood had been furnishing for a whole fortnight, as busily as if he had been about to wed a young bride.

The province or government over which the general presides, and of which, as already stated, Nishnei is the capital, is known by the contracted name of NIJEGOROD. It ranks among the first of the empire, both for the variety of its natural resources and the industry of its inhabitants. Wheat, ryes, hemp, and flax, are the principal crops; sunflower* and vegetables of every kind are also raised in great abundance, but we cannot say much for the quality of the fruits. The breeding of horses brings a great deal of money to the province, government having formed several establishments for this purpose, in addition to those of the resident landowners. Every village contains some small manufactory for making either soap, leather, ropes, sail-cloth, or some kinds of tin-work. The population is chiefly Russian, but with a great mixture of other tribes, settled here during the many invasions to which all the countries in the centre and in the east of Russia were so long exposed. Tartars, Mordwines, Tsheremisses, and Tshawashes, are ancient names still employed to describe the inhabitants of the various districts. The whole extent of the government may be about 880 square geographic miles, and the population about 1,000,000—of which, according to the statistical returns, there is not more than one in every 570 attending school—an average infinitely small when compared with the state of education amongst ourselves.

* See p. 229 of this volume.

In order to make more intelligible this and other notices, occasionally given in the course of these chapters, of the relative proportion of scholars to the population, it may be stated that, by the Presbyterial returns made pursuant to an address of the House of Commons in 1834, the average number of children then attending school in Scotland was found to be 9·2-3ds per cent. on the whole population. A similar inquiry made throughout England and Wales in 1833 shows an average of 9 per cent. on the estimated population. So that with us, in place of one scholar in 570, as in this province of Russia, there would be 51 in the same number : that is to say, the average education in this, and in many other parts of the empire, is fifty times less than that of England.

Though Nishnei-Novgorod, the capital of this fine province, has now become a place of such frequent resort for travellers—which it would be even without the fair, being on the high-road to Asiatic Russia—yet, as already stated, it does not contain anything worth the name of an inn. For our two wretched rooms—the doors of which, if doors they could be called, did not shut—we paid daily just as much as for five good ones at Moscow ; and the promised *beds* proved to be filthy mattresses. That neither sheets nor blankets were to be procured did not grieve us, for travellers in Russia soon learn to do without these effeminacies, and are glad to wrap themselves over-night in the cloaks or great-coats which have served them during the day. But we could willingly have dispensed with the amiable company which had already taken possession of these leathern retreats, and

sallied forth in thousands and tens of thousands to feast on our unhappy bodies, and to drive sleep fairly to flight. This was almost the first time, but not the last, that we suffered from such attacks in Russia.

Besides beds and blankets, there are two other important articles which have not yet found their way to the fair, nor, consequently, to the inns of Nishnei—towels and wash hand-basins. It was quite a warfare to get hold even of substitutes for these. Verily the Russians—always excepting the higher classes—cannot be charged with the vice of cleanliness, in any of its shades.

Whatever may have been our discomforts at this house, however, according to all accounts they would have been much greater at the Dom Monacho, which is situated in the lower town. Many English visitors are directed to this place; but, from the accounts given us by those who have lived in it, we should warn the traveller to locate himself in the upper town, unless he wish to be cheated (it is cheating, all the ways of it) out of four times the amount which ought to be paid.

But if even the best of the accommodation for travellers at Nishnei be very bad, its fare is far from contemptible. We feasted like boyars, on sturgeon, *tchee*—as formerly stated, rather a good but greasy soup—and other native dishes, for which we always remarked a higher price was charged than for what they were pleased to nickname French dishes. The wines at these places are very poor; but at a private house we found claret, Sauterne, Champagne, Malaga, and even—out of honour to us, doubtless—London porter, as good as ever washed the lips of bricklayers or draymen.

It was at Nishnei that we were first led particularly to remark how difficult a matter the summing up of a bill is in Russia, whether it is to be paid to merchant or innkeeper ; and even when the amount is only a few shillings. Ask what is to pay, and the landlord, instead of telling you at once, trudges off, not for a written account, but for an *abacus* or reckoning-frame, an instrument about the size of a schoolboy's ciphering-slate, with several row of wooden beads, like musket-bullets, moving freely on stiff wires stretched from end to end. When the calculation begins, crack goes a ball on one wire, two on another, and so on ; and at last, after a great many intricate movements, both of the balls and of the lips, which are muttering all the time, he tells you the amount of a bill which an English waiter would have summed up in two seconds. The process seems quite mechanical. Instruments nearly similar are said to be employed by the Chinese, who are so expert in the use of them, that, while one man is *reading over* different large items of an account, another has them *summed up* on the abacus almost before the first has done speaking. In Russia we never saw anything like expertness in using it. It must be added, however, that the payment of accounts is further complicated by the difference between the commercial and nominal value of money, formerly explained. After they have summed up the account in *monnaie*, as they call it—or at least as they called it to us—they must find out how many roubles in *assignats*, meaning government paper, are required to make up the sum. Most kinds of silver always bearing the same premium as paper, a similar calculation is necessary

when specie is offered in payment. But the matter becomes triply complicated when, after calculating the amount in *monnaie*, and converting it into *assignats*, there is still a third calculation to make, if payment is offered in a new piece nominally worth a little more than two roubles, but which in remote places is under that value. In making a bargain in Russia, it is always necessary to stipulate whether the number of roubles agreed on be *monnaie* or *assignats*.

There were a good many general travellers here about the time of our visit, among whom the English, as usual, formed the majority. The place is now, in fact, coming into such repute, that it will soon be the fashionable autumn trip to the idlers of London, as well as those of St. Petersburg. The only official personages whom we heard of among the visitors expected while we were there were the ambassadors of France and Bavaria.

It is singular to observe the groups which the increased spirit for travelling now brings together, in the most out-of-the-way corners, and from the most opposite ends of the earth. Now that men travel some thousand miles for a harvest-tour, the friend whom we dined with in town at the breaking up of Parliament may give us news from the cataracts of the Nile, or the last bulletin of the king of Ava's white elephant, when we dine with him at Christmas. This remark has been suggested by the recollection of a party at which we were present here, furnishing a good specimen, on a small scale, of the variety of characters and nations now brought together in the least likely spots. One of the guests was a Russian who had recently come from an embassy in Spain.

Another was a German, one of the *Ariadne*-Bethmans, who had told his cook one fine morning that he wanted his company on a drive across from the pleasant city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, to see what sort of fare there might be among the Ural Mountains. A third was a tutor from Paderborn, who had long been an exile; but the eyes of the good man moistened, and his lips quivered, as we gave him news of what he called his "*gutes schönes Vaterland*." The fourth was also a German, come from we know not where, but probably from Newmarket, of which his talk savoured most marvellously, and now bent on a little trip into Asia, which could not be extended above a thousand miles or two, as he had to be at Melton Mowbray in December. We, the English part of the company, had as nice little journeys before us as any of the company;—for, besides having a great part of Russia yet to run through, we had Turkey and Greece to visit before eating our new-year's dinner, which some of us hoped to do luxuriously at Naples, some politically in Ireland, and some philosophically in the Temple. Yet we made as sure of being able to accomplish these journeys, though it was now the middle of autumn, as if we had been shooting partridges in Normandy, or counting the waves at Brighton, and not on the last confines of Europe, separated by roadless deserts and fickle seas from the places we were aiming at.

The journey through Nishnei to Asia must by and by come into vogue. Prince Butera's reports of his excursion will send everybody thither. The high cultivation of the country surprised him beyond expression. "He had seen nothing equal to it," were his words, as

repeated to us. The road, for the whole of the 255 miles from this to Kasan, is said to be through a country still more highly cultivated than the neighbourhood of Nishnei.

From the business character of the fair, government finds that there is no occasion for being at much expense in providing amusement for the congregated thousands; for, generally speaking, they all find amusement for themselves in their occupations. This object, however, has not been altogether neglected, several places of amusement being constantly open in the fair. The best frequented of all is the theatre for the regular drama, conducted by a troop of the best actors in Russia.

We little expected to meet with Shakspeare on the banks of the Volga; but genius has the privilege of belonging to every country. Being told that *Othello* was to be acted on one of the evenings of our stay, we could not resist the temptation of seeing how the fatal love of the Moor would be represented in the most easterly theatre in Europe. The house, once a barrack, is very well fitted up, with a state-box, and all the paraphernalia of a metropolitan establishment. It is fully equal in size and show to the better of the minor theatres in London. The prices being very high and the attendance always full, the sums drawn must be very considerable. The governor was in his box, and had some gay company near him. The pit was filled with merchants, while the stalls gave shelter to the common herd of travellers, and some literary Frenchmen, waging war with a Russian general high in command here. Who would have expected to find the battles of the ro-

manticists and classicists of the *Français*, or the scandal of the *Opéra Comique*, revived among the swamps of the Okka?

From the scarcity of ladies, the aspect of the house was far from gay: it had, in fact, a most sombre appearance, in spite of the great number of officers present. Such a many-tongued assemblage never before sat down together. English and German were heard on every side. Near us grave and bearded Russians were in converse with aquiline-nosed Armenians. A grinning Kiptchak sat by the side of a high-browed Georgian, and the small eye of the Tartar might be seen twinkling near the watery, unmeaning phiz of a Carenlian. All spoke, but what most of them spoke, or how they contrived to make themselves intelligible to each other, is more than we can pretend to explain. So far as we could learn, most of those present, though belonging originally to such different tribes, had acquired Russian from their residence in Astracan. Of whatever tongue they might be, however, it was impossible not to be struck with the great solemnity and high civility apparent in the demeanour and look of all.

To criticise a performance carried on in a language of which we know so little would be going beyond even the usual licence of critics and travellers. We understood just enough to perceive that the play is not a translation, but an adaptation. The acts are very short, and the story altogether advances much more rapidly than in the original play. There is no Iago, and consequently no Emilia. In place of the husband, there is a very unmeaning Pesaro, and for his lady they have invented a

horrid duenna, dressed in secondhand black. Desdemona — pronounced Djesmona — was performed in a style somewhat too matronly, perhaps, yet with much nature and tenderness, by a full German-looking dame, with soft features and softer tongue. Othello himself raged nobly in the person of a stout, intellectual-faced, half-savage personage, who, like some of our own great actors, began in a low equable tone, reserving his energies for the passionate scenes, in which he was tremendous. His slight copper tinge showed the varying expression of the face much better than the sooty brush of the English stage; and the red tunic, with the short Venetian mantle, left the limbs more free than the ample robe, more usually worn. The plainness of his attire contrasted amazingly with the gorgeous over-dressing of the “very grave and reverend seigniors” before whom he pleaded.

We could not seize all the shades of passion which he meant to convey, but lost less than we had expected. Now and then, when gloating, in anticipation, over his meditated vengeance, he was quite fearful; the house shook with his growls almost as much as with the applause which rewarded his best scenes. There was great beauty in the scene where, from trying to *hate* his wife, he passes all of a sudden to the touching confession “*njeat, njeat,*” “no! no! I cannot!”

The father is here a more conspicuous character than with us. He seems to act a very cruel and unnatural part, prevailing on his daughter to sign some document or other, seemingly a letter to Cassio, to whom she also gives the gold ornament from her hair. These Othello

gets hold of—there is no handkerchief—and produces to his wife in evidence of her guilt. The final scene is brought on with appalling haste. The thunder grumbles loud in the midnight gloom—Othello enters, his eyes rolling in ominous contradiction with his vainly-assumed tranquillity—the scene soon becomes animated—sharp words from his lips, gentle denials from hers—till he draws the dagger, and sinks it slowly in her breast, on which she falls at his feet, breathing nothing in death but “Otella !” feebly “Otella !”

The afterpiece was a translation of Scribe’s *Demoiselle à marier*, which was acted with great life. The vaudeville couplets of the French stage, at all times detestable, are even still more abominable in Russian.. They put the audience into excellent humour, however; and the governor himself, who had come round to sit in the stalls, gallantly waited till the actress had been recalled.

Who, then, will say that Russia is not advancing in civilization? Monsieur Scribe flourishing on the confines of her Asiatic possessions, in company with one of the very newest devices of modern times—the recalling, namely, of a dead Othello and a living demoiselle—are proofs of civilization which we defy the whole French Academy, and M. Scribe at its head, to impugn.

It was long past midnight ere we got home. The stars gleamed bright and joyous from the peaceful Volga; but, among the thousand slumberers on its bosom, all was as still as if the scenes which we had so lately beheld, full of life and its vanities, had suddenly returned to their primitive loneliness.

CHAPTER XVII.

CROSS-CUT THROUGH THE OLD COUNTRY OF THE
TARTARS.

Road-rakers—Men in gloves—Bare legs—Evening scene—The Cloister—The hermit—*Melenky*—Hospitality of an old soldier—Scenery more lively—Running stream—Appearance and habits of the Tartar population—Russian shepherdesses—Motley flocks—Herdsman in Germany—KAZIMOV—Decayed aspect—Tartar suburb—Shah Ali's tomb—Another ferry—Boat-dragging—Swimming horses—*Eraktour*—A sandy village—Post-house suppers—Crops—Sunflower, its uses—Wattles—Government of Riazan—Town of RIAZAN—German inns—Printing establishments in the provinces—Market—Bad fruits in Russia—Neglect of the Sabbath.

EVERY Russian being taxed twenty-five kopeeks ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$) a year for the maintenance of the roads, it is scarcely reasonable that the people should at the same time be liable to such oppressive service as that which we found them performing soon after starting on our southward journey. A short way from Nishnei, what seemed the whole population of the country were busy at work, clearing, or rather cleaning, the way for the emperor, which, as we were given to understand, they are bound to do without any remuneration. The wide road, therefore, was literally covered for miles with peasants, men and women, raking the sand to the side, while fleets of harrows were breaking the rougher parts.

It struck us to find in these crowds, as in previous instances, among the "hardy" Russians, as we call them,

that even the roughest boor never works *without gloves*. The effeminacy is explained by their long and terrible winter, when the cold is so great that no skin could endure it; while the summer is not long enough to break them from the habit of wearing gloves. But if the hands are thus defended, it is curious enough that the women generally leave the legs bare, or nearly so; for they seldom wear anything but stockings without feet—*scot-tice*, “moggins”—leaving a great part of the ancle exposed, except, as is often the case, when these imperfect stockings are left hanging loose on the clumsy sandal. Many are even guilty of another Scottish enormity—going bare-legged altogether—especially the women of the washing-barges on the Okka. These ladies, be it also stated, were the only *young* women we had seen in Russia employed in any out-of-doors work. In the villages, and all along the road, none are seen but old women or children.

After passing these bands, we journeyed on a whole day without meeting a single object to rouse our attention. At last, however, we came on a scene which, besides being in itself beautiful, possessed an additional charm, from the rarity with which scenes at all approaching to the picturesque are to be met with in Russia. We were now near Yarimov, about fifty-four miles from Nishnei. The sun had already set, when, on entering a wide valley, we descried the white walls of a cloister rising among the trees of a thinly-wooded island, which is very beautifully situated in the middle of a small lake. This scene of perfect repose was in itself very attractive; and even while we were gazing on it, its

charms were heightened by the light of the rising moon, which, nearly at full, now began to appear in the low horizon, and threw a reddening shade over the trees and pale towers. All is peace and rest around—not a leaf stirs—not a single object is near to distract the attention. But mark!—a sight unexpected in a scene which appeared to be the haunt of solitude itself—a human figure appears!

“Why stands so fix’d that hermit form?”

It is an aged monk, with long beard, and clad in white robes. As we advanced, he came forward from a small place of shelter on the shore of the lake, to ask alms for the brotherhood. The silence of the evening hour solemnized the feelings inspired by the scene, and we parted from it almost ready to admit that, even in Russia, there may be sometimes such a thing as poetry. Alas! it was the only scene in a two thousand miles’ journey that betrayed us into this avowal.

On again reaching MOUROM, we struck off towards Toula, in the centre of Russia, by a cross-road so little frequented, that everybody had assured us there would be difficulty in getting through it; but so far was this from being the case, that we were able to make better progress than in the more frequented routes. Our journey, however, was impeded for a time by a furious thunder-storm, and at night the increasing rain compelled us to take shelter in *Melenky*, a small district town of the government of Vladimir, eighteen miles from Mourom.

Melenky boasts of a glass-work of considerable repute, and carries on some general trade with the nearest

towns. But though the books had told us these facts regarding it, we did not expect to meet with much comfort, nor to enjoy much kindness while within its gates, and were, therefore, the more grateful for the attention shown to us by the postmaster, a respectable old soldier, who received us, wet, weary, and wayworn, with a hospitality and a warmth which we can never forget. Believing ourselves in a place of public entertainment, we called lustily for all that could be got—supped as travellers in Russia rarely sup, and slept as travellers in Russia still more rarely sleep—*on beds*. In fact, the good man took a great deal of trouble on the occasion, he and his little son waiting on us as anxiously as if we had been their lords. Much as all this surprised us, however, we were still more surprised when morning came: our kind host and his household were up by daylight, to prepare tea and coffee for the parting refreshment; they also gave us every aid in making our toilette, and with an alacrity which showed that they were delighted to contribute to our comforts. Yet in return for their wine, apples, beds, and other good things, besides a world of trouble, they would not accept of a single farthing of remuneration. The ribbon on the old gentleman's breast showed us that he had himself wandered, and perhaps the recollection of kindness received as a stranger had taught him how much the stranger prizes an unexpected courtesy.

Throughout the district which we were now traversing some of the villages have a more compact look than those to which we had hitherto been accustomed. Many of them we entered by a large wooden gateway, from which

a thin fence stretches round the whole place. The villages also become much more numerous : indeed the great number of them often in sight at one time renders this part of the country exceedingly cheerful. Almost every ridge is adorned with a village, looking placidly down on the fine fields and meadows stretching on all sides.

The roads, too, are of a much more agreeable character ; for in place of mud, we have fine wide glades of hard green sward, with woods of birch and fir on either hand, and large flocks of white cattle feeding from bank to bank. Altogether, few parts of Russia have such a rural look. In most other places the views are so heavy and cheerless that the mind tires beyond description ; but now there is some freshness, some variety. And hark ! the murmur of living water ! It is the voice of a small stream stealing softly through the grass, the first really rustic sound that had greeted us for many days, for on these dull plains water stagnates as much as life and joy would seem to do :

“ Within these regions drear was never heard
The pipe of pastoral swain—the bleat of flocks
Within these valleys never !—but the howl
Of famish'd wolves is echo'd fearfully.
No Naiad, hidden in the sedgy stream,
Carols beneath its tide her lay, misdeem'd
The music of the waters : here no stream
Meanders softly by its verdant marge.”

The population of the country after leaving Melenky is greatly mixed with foreign blood. The population of the government of Vladimir is purely Russian, but the governments to the south-east contain both Mordwines and Tartars. In the province of Riazan, which we were

now approaching, and in the villages after leaving Melenky, there are considerable bodies of the latter, who to this day retain the manners of their forefathers. In habits, of course, they are completely changed; these wild tribes, once the terror of Muscovy, being now among the most peaceable inhabitants of the empire. Their houses are smaller than those of the Russians, and their domestic arrangements of the rudest kind. Strangers who have lived amongst them say that their marriage and funeral ceremonies are conducted with singular pomp; and even the passing traveller may note amongst them some of the wild usages ascribed in books to their ancestors. Their swarthy oval face, and small well-moulded figures—their round forehead, hooked nose, and dark eyes—are all so different from the surrounding sameness of Russian features, that the traveller at once distinguishes them, even if their ragged, indescribable habiliments were not so noticeable. They are soon recognised, also, by the furious pace at which they drive their *kybitkas*, or carts; which, however, are no longer employed as moveable tents, but for the vulgar purposes of the field and the road.

These wild-looking men interested us, as the advanced sentinels of a race famed for great deeds, and more widely spread than perhaps any other in the world. One portion of the Tartar tribes fills Central Asia nearly from side to side; and as if the largest share of one quarter of the globe were not enough to hold them, we here find them advancing many hundred miles into another quarter.

Towards the northern frontier of the government of Riazan the farmers appear to be very comfortable. Hops

in small plots may be seen near most of the villages, and patches of sunflower in the gardens. Oats, barley, and a little wheat, are also cultivated. The flocks feeding in the road-track and on the commons are so numerous, that several villages must unite in making them up. Pigs, which have become very abundant, and mingle most sociably with the sheep and cattle, are only a very few degrees removed from the wild-boar. Turkeys have also made their appearance about some of the yards, but geese are rare.

In Russia the village flock—a motley family of all kinds of live-stock, straggling over the common far and near—is always tended by the *women*. In Germany the pigs, geese, and cows form three distinct squadrons, and generally feed in different places, *men* tending the pigs and cows, while *boys* in top-boots, and wielding a four-in-hand whip, care for the geese. With a huge (tobacco) pipe in his mouth, knitting-wires in his hands, and a great military cloak on his shoulders, a German shepherd is the most unsentimental of all living sights, except it be, perhaps, a Russian herdsman. But we will not shock the reader's fine fancies with a description of *her* terrible charms. Let it suffice to state, that she would make an admirable wife to the Teutonic monster whose picture we have drawn.

As we pass along, birch and fir continue to be the most frequent kinds of wood. Oak is occasionally seen, but as yet neither beech nor ash appears. Where the woods have been cleared away, young trees have been planted, as an edging to the road, always three together, so as to shelter each other, and leave less chance of gaps from accident.

In one of the larger villages some fête was going forward, an occasion on which the old-fashioned dresses of the country are always abundantly displayed. Among the women here, as in other parts of the country, gaudy colours are still in greatest favour. One had a dress of scarlet silk, and a little French net-cap; a style very unusual in those remote parts, where it is rare to see a female of the lower or middle class dressed to look at all like any other European. Most of them wear the showy little national tippet of yellow or red silk, lined with fur.

As a proof that this route is little frequented, we noticed that most of the men uncovered as we passed—a mark of respect not very usual in Russia. The only salutations we had hitherto been greeted with were on the road to Nishnei, when the Colonel's yellow buttons or our courier's military look, occasionally procured us a salute from some Cossack sentinel.

We were detained some time in KAÇIMOFF, a very ancient city of the government of Riazan, sixty-six miles from Mourom. It stands high on the left bank of the Okka, which, like many more of the Russian rivers, seems throughout the greater part of its course to be bounded on one side by a very steep bank, while the other is perfectly flat. This place is greatly famed in Tartar history, and in our approach to the town we had seen many of that race, distinguishable from all about them by their black beards and gleaming eye, as well as by their favourite skull-cap clinging close to the head. In fact, there is a suburb here occupied entirely by Tartars, containing at least five hundred of unmixed blood. Their

quarter forms a careless encampment of miserable huts, huddled together on a high point above the river. The terrible Shah-Ali is interred amongst them, in a tomb raised beside the ancient mosque. His fame slumbers beneath an Arabic inscription, which nobody seeks to read.

The entire population of Kaçimoff may be about 4,500. The town has a neglected, decaying look. A pair of comely maidens, leaning from a balcony, seemed sadly at a loss how to kill time; but except these lonely doves, we could discover few signs of life in what seemed the best part of the town. The sound of billiards, and the music of a barrel-organ, sounded most woefully from a half-deserted mansion not far from where we halted; but they only made the dreariness of the place more perceptible. A broad, ill-paved street, overhung by houses which appeared in many instances to be abandoned, and ready to tumble down, brought us to an old church, behind which we found a poor apology for the univereal Gostinoï dvor, with people selling turnips, and other coarse vegetables, on the muddy slope that led to it. Bread, as usual, was seen in great quantities: as in most of the other towns, it is sold by weight, the women or boys who have charge of the stall carrying a small steel balance about with them for the purpose. Begging seems to be the only industry of the place; our carriage was at one time surrounded by vociferous claimants—a sight most unusual in the centre and south of Russia. Even in the north we were seldom addressed by more than three or four applicants at any resting-place.

The dress of the women here is remarkable. A robe of coarse dark cloth, made somewhat like a soldier's

great-coat, is fastened round the body by a belt ; boots, short and strong, enable them to march through the mud ; and the head is adorned with a whitish handkerchief, folded stiff and square in front, and hanging loose behind, in distant imitation, but with none of the piquancy, of the Italian brunette.

The Okka, wider even than when we last crossed it far below, pops sadly in the traveller's way. On leaving Kaçimoff we passed to its right bank, but had again to ferry across it, or some of its arms, oftener than once within the next fifty miles. The higher bank of the river here consists of a bright yellow freestone, very soft, but employed in the buildings of the town. Till now we had scarcely seen the face of anything approaching to a rock in Russia.

In entering the boats at ferries we generally came out of the carriage for fear of accidents ; but both Russian men and Russian horses seemed to think this ceremony very unnecessary : for the man on the box, as well as the little fellow on the front horse, always kept their seat, and rattled up to the farther edge of the boat as coolly as if still on land. We have never seen any accident on these occasions, the boats being in general very well managed. Country people crossing in them along with us remained uncovered all the time. A Russian of rank would probably think himself degraded did he not insist on this humiliating mark of respect.

While we were crossing the Okka at Kaçimoff, a heavy barge was ascending the stream, drawn by at least thirty horses, which formed one of the strangest teams ever beheld, one line running here, another there, but all

doing their work well. It was a singular sight, with three or four peasants flying about among the various lines of horses, now smacking to the right, and then screaming to the left, with restless fury. Similar teams may be seen in various parts of France, especially about Arles, and, if we recollect aright, even as far north as near Besançon ; but the Russians seldom make their horses take to the water as the French do. The latter often make their jaded brutes swim with immense loads against the stream.

The soil now became very sandy and poor : for a considerable distance we had on either hand wild forest-land, which would be of little value were it not for the plentiful crops of mushrooms which it rears.

* Near the large village of *Eraktour*, twenty miles from Kaçimoff, the scanty stubble was pastured by geese. The downs bear so little grass, that fewer cows are kept in this part of the country than in those previously traversed : those seen, however, are very fine. There are two large churches in this place, one of which is of surprising splendour for such a remote corner.

Somewhere near this we passed through a village, whose street, only about an eighth of a mile wide, is one broad bed of sand, in some places rising in ridges near as high as the houses. The people, however, seemed to think it a very lovely scene ; for as we toiled slowly through it, they were sitting in philosophic admiration by the doors, or trudging gaily about behind the sand-hills, the men in sheepskins, and the women in flannel garments, of a colour scarcely distinguishable from the fickle pavement on which they were exhibiting themselves.

When we reached *Tcherskoyé*, eighteen miles farther on, the rain had become so heavy that the passage from the carriage to the inn was an expedition attended with considerable peril. A merry supper, however, soon made us forget our ducking. Of the said supper it ought to be mentioned that it was eked out by a bottle, not of wine, but of water, from the old postmaster—all he had to give us. Lightly as the reader may deem of such a matter, a bottle of water in Russia is sometimes no easy conquest. A few nights before, supping, or rather dining—for we kept very fashionable hours, eating luncheon *à la Russe* in the carriage, and seldom stopping to dine till eight or nine o'clock—dining, then, at a very showy post-house, so poorly were our entertainers provided with articles for the table, that, to say nothing of a glass, not even a bowl, nor a cup of any kind, could be got, to put on the table with water for us. Aided by the propitious moon, however, the youngsters explored the kitchen or other remote settlements, and soon returned in triumph, with a suspicious-looking tub, brimming with the refreshing liquid, as black as a tan-pit—no seemly ornament, it is true, for the festive board, but to us doubly welcome as a trophy of daring prowess; it having been captured from reluctant matrons, who, thinking they might for ever bid adieu to their uncomely utensil if it once fell into the hands of the rapacious English, fought with desperate but unavailing bravery, to prevent them from laying hold of it.

At a late hour—our supper at Eraktour being finished—we turned in, not to bed, but to our caravan, and held on all night. Morning found us at *Kistrous*, a post-

house among young birch trees on a sandy knoll, the country seen from which is of very different character from that through which we had now for some days been travelling. Both waving forest and fertile field have disappeared; sandy undulations stretch away on every side, with a lazy river creeping through them.

On advancing farther, oats become more frequent. In place of the scraggy birches, close lines of not very fine willows are planted on each side of the road. The houses, especially those for cattle, are made of close wattles. When fertile spots occur, every garden is filled with strong beds of the *sunflower*; and on inquiring into the use made of this plant, we were given to understand that it is here raised chiefly for the oil expressed from it. But it is also of use for many other purposes. In the market-places of the larger towns we often found the people eating the seeds, which, when boiled in water, taste not unlike the boiled Indian corn eaten by the Turks. In some districts of Russia the seeds are employed with great success in fattening poultry: they are also said to increase the number of eggs more than any other kind of grain. Pheasants and partridges eat them with great avidity, and find the same effects from them as other birds. The dried leaves are given to cattle in place of straw, and the withered stalks are said to produce a considerable quantity of alkali. With so many valuable properties, it did not surprise us to see the sunflower cultivated in every cottage-garden. We found it throughout the whole of the centre and south of Russia.

Though the government in which we were now travelling (Riazan) is one of the most important in Russia,

both in point of wealth and population, yet it cannot boast of more than one scholar to 934 inhabitants: in other words, the average education of the people is one eighty-fourth part of that of England! Of parish schools there are very few; and even those in the district towns are but poorly attended. The same remark applies, unfortunately, to too many of the governments of Russia.

The south-eastern districts of this province are said to be much more fertile than those through which we passed. The pastures of these are so rich, that the Cossacks of the Ukraine are in the habit of driving large herds to graze on them in summer, before disposing of them for the markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. According to the very minute statistical account of the province drawn up by General Balachef in 1824, there were 202 manufacturing establishments in this government, for spinning, weaving, needle-making, glassworks, &c. There are thirty brandy-distilleries, the greater part of whose produce is sold within the province. The other products, such as corn, cattle, honey, tallow, iron, and wood-work, find their way to Nishnei and Moscow, by means of the Okka and the Moskwa. The whole extent of the government is estimated at 723 square geographical miles, and the population at 1,032,043.*

RIAZAN, 156 miles south-west from Mourom, and 127 south-east from Moscow, is one of the gayest-looking towns in the interior of Russia. The rise of this place has been very rapid. In the time of Catherine II. it contained only 1,500 souls, and now there are at least ten thousand industrious citizens well supported within it. It occupies

* Further details will be found in SCHNITZLER, pp. 330—334.

a wide hollow, and part of the adjacent declivities. The houses and the streets are in general both spacious and handsome, especially towards the centre of the city, where there is a public garden with a gay kiosk, flower-plots, Grecian columns, and trellised verandahs, all in high order. We found a tolerable inn, kept by a German from Breslau, who seems to have adopted Russian habits, both in his housekeeping and way of charging. There are huge sofas in some of the rooms, intended for beds ; and in others, that substitute for a bed which is universal throughout our journey—a rude frame with a coarse brown rug nailed on it, over which the traveller lays the bedding he has brought with him.

We always find a printing establishment, perhaps two, in such places as this : but the state of provincial literature is not so flourishing as might be inferred from the existence of these establishments ; for no books are printed at them, and country newspapers are totally unknown. Indeed, after leaving Moscow, neither book nor newspaper is ever to be seen in places for the accommodation of travellers. Any printing executed in the country is merely of government schedules, church ceremonies, &c.

We had here new occasion to remark the bad quality of all kinds of fruit in Russia. At St. Petersburg, and indeed everywhere, except in the extreme south, the fruit is the worst of any country in Europe. The market-place here was full of every kind of fruit ; but the only good one was that of the bramble, which is large and well-flavoured. Of the many varieties of apples exhibited, the only eatable one was that known amongst us by the name of the *nonesuch*.

It is impossible even for the most careless traveller to escape being struck with the way in which the Sabbath is kept in these provincial towns. People were busy at work on the fields in the neighbourhood; and the market-place was crowded with peasants selling their potatoes, mushrooms, apples, turnips, cucumbers, &c., just as on ordinary week-days. The *Gostinoï dvor* was also open. In short, Sunday seems to be the great fair-day in most parts of Russia. Except that towards evening the women may be seen sitting by the cottage-doors in tiaras whiter than usual, there is little to tell that it is the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISIT TO TOULA, THE BIRMINGHAM OF RUSSIA.

Female costumes — Pretty country — Village belles — The harvest—*Hair* hunt—ZARANSK — Cooking our dinner — Evening song—Marriage party—Stuck in the mud—Night travelling—*Venev*—Perishability of Russian architecture—Windmills—*Aniskina*—Breakfast with an old peasant woman—Gipsy scene—Habits of Russian gipsies—The DON—Its source, &c. TOULA—Its misfortunes—Manufactures—Guns—Iron and steel works—Rings—Snuff-boxes—Russian gun-making compared with English—Sorry inn—More sleeping sights—Travelling fare—Butcher-market—Herd coming home.

AFTER passing Riazan, the traveller discovers a very welcome improvement in the features of the people. He no longer meets the dark tint and darker eye of the Tartar; fair, softish features are predominant, and some of the women might pass for good-looking. This impression, however, may, in part, be attributable to their dashing costume, which is much superior to that last described. The flat front of the head-dress is now adorned with gold or silver embroidery, while the portion floating behind is of finer materials, and looks much more graceful.* The legs are swathed in folds of white worsted, and the feet lodged in sandals. The principal robe is a white eastern tunic, girdled round the waist, but floating loose below, and left open enough at the bosom to display the top of a short petticoat trimmed with red. In gay tiara and flaunting robe, the maidens of Riazan strut about with all the dignity of tragic queens.

The scenery in the western portion of the government of Riazan, through which our route now lay, is of a much more pleasing character than any we had yet seen in Russia. Villages lie in every hollow, sheltered by fine clumps of oak. Wide sweeps of the richest pasture stretch far in the distance, while the nearer fields are covered with heavy crops of grain ready for the mower.

Is there, then, a connexion between beauty of scenery and beauty of person? Let the curious in such matters account for it as they may, the women here, and for the next forty miles, are by far the prettiest we saw in Russia. Precisely where the scenery began to improve, the looks of the people also began to improve.

The women were sauntering idly from door to door, while their husbands, now at an advanced hour of the afternoon, were still busy cutting grain in the fields, with the short scythe which seems to be the implement most generally employed by them for the purpose. The rain, which had annoyed us for so many days, having ceased, the roads, though still rough, were already dry: from the nature of the soil, it dries almost with the first hour of sunshine. The village herds, as usual, were revelling in the wide track. Milk and cream, as rich as those of Norway itself, may be had in every hamlet.

In the return carts which were constantly passing us, it was no uncommon thing to see a lad with his head laid luxuriously on the knee of his companion, who is busy searching his hair for a species of live-stock, said to flourish amazingly on Russian pasturage.

Though the old town of ZARAISK—the first place of any importance on this route—contains five thousand in-

habitants, we could not find in it anything like a regular inn. The kind mistress of the post-house, however, gave up her best chamber, from which we scared away the pretty guests who had come to spend the evening with her. She evidently thought herself more than paid for our intrusion, by the amusement she had in witnessing the good-humoured perseverance displayed by the most useful members of our party, in cooking a dinner from the mushrooms they had gathered by the way. In fact, we have no doubt but their culinary fame will long live in the annals of Zaraïsk.

On such occasions as the one now alluded to, we always found the people delighted with any departure from the sullen pomposity of Russian travellers. Cookmaid, help, mistress, and all, trot backwards and forwards with the greatest alacrity, and appear to be overjoyed when they succeed in guessing at our wants. We never find any disposition to cheat, except at the more regular inns—just as among the regular shopkeepers. The country-people who supply us with anything, or those of the less frequented post-houses, are extremely moderate in their charges. We also found the postmasters most civil and attentive. Each hurried on his blue uniform surtout the moment we were seen approaching, and they were always out to receive us.

The town has more than the usual quantity of broad streets, but its houses are going rapidly to decay. The columns on many are black and broken, and the once well-plastered bricks of most of them are all bared by the frosts. St. Petersburg would have exactly the same look as this place has, were the annual scrubbings and

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patchings discontinued for a year or two. Many of the churches, as in other places, have rude fresco pictures *outside*, on the large space above the principal entrance. Here is a ruinous Kremlin, and a Gostinoï dvor, black and gloomy; and beyond a deep hollow a town of wooden houses may be seen, the streets of which are as closely covered with grass as the best pastures in the province.

Altogether, Zarsk is a lonely, sinking place. Yet we saw some happy sights in it. Young women were tripping about in red slippers and red silks, bound for some merry-making. The grey walls of the Kremlin were invested with new beauty by the shadowy splendour of the moonlight which began to fall on them as we again resumed our journey. On the open space in front of this venerable ruin, a band of young girls, twined hand-in-hand, were singing to a simple violin a slow half-plaintive melody. The voice of the young, however untutored, is always heard with pleasure, but its effect was really delightful at the quiet hour when evening has hushed all around so completely into repose, that

“ No sound intrudes, save what the awaken'd ear
Of listening Fancy catches with delight
And mingles with her meditations wild.”

The whole population seemed to be indulging in gaiety, as if hastily availing themselves of what *we* found so rare in Russia—a fine evening. In walking down a descent near the Kremlin, which is so steep that it was thought unsafe to remain in the carriage—and it is almost the first time we have had occasion to employ the word *steep* in writing of Russia—we found a crowd of gazers

assembled round a cottage where a marriage party were holding their feast. But for the long white veil which fell gracefully on her shoulder, the bride would scarcely have been distinguished in the throng; for she had more the look of a fading mother than of a nuptial spouse. The people around her looked very quiet and very stupid. One or two were in the uniform of excise-clerks; but they were completely eclipsed by the vulgar splendour of one magnificent personage, who, in glaring waist-coat and long surtout, was strutting about the room, with a huge chibouque in his mouth, volleying forth tobacco clouds, without any regard to the comforts of those whom he honoured with his presence.

The climate of Russia is surely the worst of all the climates in the world. No sooner had we begun to flatter ourselves that we should have fine weather for the remainder of our journeyings, than our bright hopes were cast down: for though the evening was so beautiful when we started from Zaraisk, we had not gone far before the rain again converted our fine roads into such a puddle that, having only four horses, we fairly stuck by the way. So familiar, however, had we now become with these trifling interruptions, that most of us slept on in the cold and rain, without knowing that anything unusual had happened. The struggles of the nags to pull us out of the slough were taken for the natural joltings of these smooth paths. At last, however, the jaded beasts succeeded in extricating us, and before morning we had made a journey of forty miles, to *Venev*, a district town of the government of Toul.

This town occupies one of the few heights to be found

in Russia. The approach to it is the steepest piece of road that we recollect in the whole country. It boasts four thousand inhabitants, a church or two, very conspicuous on the high ground, a wooden prison, streets full of mud, and a hovel of a post-house, surrounded by a morass of such impassable mire and filth, that it was scarcely safe to put the foot down. A soft yellow sandstone being now frequent, most of the houses here, as in Zaráisk, have the foundations of stone: the superstructure is of stuccoed brick. Many of the mansions *have been* showy, with their ranges of pilasters, verandahs, and balconies; but now they are in such a dilapidated state, showing patches of naked brick round every window, and roofs threatening to slide over, that we should advise the admirers of Russian architecture to take a trip this length before saying too much about the splendours of the capital. Ten years ago, Venev was as gaudy as the Nefskoi Prospekht.

On entering the government of Toula, woods, which have gradually been becoming more scarce, are seen only at very wide intervals. The cottages, which hitherto have always been of timber, except for the short tract where the outhouses were formed of wattles, are now of clay. Windmills are fighting valorously on every height: they are not very abundant near St. Petersburg, but sufficiently numerous about Nishnei, and almost everywhere else.

As we advanced, most of the fields were already ploughed for the next crop; but the harvest in general was only about half through.

At *Aniskina*, a village consisting of one wide street,

with a single line of houses on each side, the only accommodation that could be found was in a poor woman's house adjoining the post. An outside stair, dirty and crazy, led to a garret, whose dimensions might be some eight feet by seven, with a wretched pallet in one corner, and another sleeping-place over or rather *on* the large plastered stove, which appears to be a favourite position for beds among the people. In this room, which moreover opened on a balcony—for, even in the most miserable hamlets, the Russian matrons must have a lolling place for idle hours—we breakfasted on milk, the only thing that could be got. There was a tea-urn among the lumber, which was more than we expected in so poor a place; but it seemed very doubtful whether we could procure a fire to boil water with. This convinced us experimentally that we were no longer in the forests of the north. To make up for all deficiencies, however, the good mistress sat down on a bench in the room, to enliven us with her company, but found our mirth so dull, that she was fast asleep in a few minutes. When roused to be paid, she was in such raptures with the trifle bestowed, that she could not be kept from prostrating herself to the ground and touching it with her forehead, first at the feet of the one who paid her, and then to the company.

Soon after setting out from this last place, we passed a small encampment of gipsies, who had taken up their habitation in a crazy car or two, that were standing unyoked on the green turf of the middle of the road. Meet them in what corner of the earth we may, these singular beings are ever the same. The dark elf-locks and flash-

ing eye of each member of the band, the mother's whine, the outstretched hand and ready antic of the youthful beggar, the sullen scowl of the father, the rags, the filth—all were precisely the same as would have been presented by a troop of Bohemians at the Pont de Garde, or in any other part of Europe. Institutions, dynasties, manners—everything around them may change; but this mysterious race continues the same in every kingdom and in every clime.

But where was the donkey? a band of gipsies without a donkey is incomplete. We can only account for the deficiency by stating another fact, that donkeys are unknown in Russia, at least in the parts which we traversed.

Farther south we often met gipsies, both in country places and in the markets of large towns, and in every instance found new reason to wonder at the unchangeableness of their habits. It is impossible to mistake them. We have seen them in almost every corner of Europe, and never missed the dark eye and tawny features—the look, the glare, the something, be it called what it may, that used to terrify in infancy, and cannot be forgotten through life. In one of the towns a Russian gentleman with whom we were passing through the market-place asked a young Bohemian if she would bring her band to sing to us. The offer was eagerly accepted, but circumstances prevented its fulfilment. It appears that they are reckoned the best singers in Russia. When a feast is given on any great occasion in private families, it is usual to have a band of them to sing before the company; and it is said that the performance, while singu-

larly wild, is yet of very great beauty. Their trade of fortune-telling thrives here as much as in other lands ; and the Russian housewives, like those of other countries, by no means deem their poultry more safe when the ragged tent is in the neighbourhood. Alas ! too, another branch of their trade—at least, one for which they are notorious in Bohemia—still characterises them in Russia—their extreme licentiousness, and readiness to lend themselves to the vilest occupations.

Not far from the road we were now upon lies the small lake, Ivanofskoe, in which the DON has its source. Though this river, known to the ancients as the Tanais, is not among the largest of Russian streams, yet its name is more familiar than that of any other, from the fact of its being always associated with that of the most powerful of the Cossack tribes, whose country it waters in the lower part of its course. From the point where it rises till it enters the sea of Azoff at Tcherkask, it winds a course of nearly nine hundred miles, but is generally so sluggish and full of shallows, that at no part of its career is it navigable for vessels of any size. From the middle of April to the end of June small vessels come as high as Zadonsk ; but at other times there are not more than two feet of water on the sand-beds. Its mouth is so completely choked with sand, that none but flat boats can be used upon it. As far as Voronesh its course lies through fertile hills ; from that place, till it pass the chain of the Volga, its left bank is so flat, that the waters often spread over it in unhealthy swamps ; but its right bank is lofty. In the lower part of its course there is a dreary steppe on the left side, and chalk hills on the

right. Though its waters are so strongly impregnated with chalk and mud as to be dangerous to those unaccustomed to drink them, yet they abound with all the kinds of fish usually found in Russian rivers. There is neither a whirlpool nor a waterfall in its whole course.

Our cross-journey was now drawing to a close. We had every reason to be satisfied with ourselves for having made it, the saving of distance—besides avoiding a second visit to Moscow—being at least seventy versts. The road itself is also much better, and, from the small number of travellers, horses may be got more readily than on the great routes. The post-horses are not all so good as those on the south road, but a tolerable set is met with now and then.

We joined the great road to Odessa at the once rich and flourishing city of TOULA, 348 miles from Nishnei, and 117 in a direct line from Moscow. The city is finely situated on both banks of the small stream of the Oopa. The houses fill a wide hollow, and spread gently back till they reach two ridges of considerable elevation, which are covered with mansions of very imposing appearance.

Dr. Clarke's beautiful description of this place, as a scene of happy industry, was fresh in our memory as we entered; but we looked in vain for the life and bustle which he dwells on with such delight. Churches there still are in abundance; but the "ringing of bells" is now as silent as the "hum of industry." We drove through the kremlin, but found nothing in it except crumbling walls, and a desolate melancholy square occupied by some wretched booths. We next traversed a wide street, and

—still seeing no sign of prosperity—began to wonder at the fairy-tale of the great traveller—when, on advancing a little farther, the blackened fronts and empty windows of some burnt houses reminded us of the sad calamities which have brought ruin and desolation on this ill-fated place. Within the short reign of the present emperor, Toula has been twice ravaged by fire ! It had just begun to recover from the first conflagration, when a second, in 1834, reduced one-half of its thirty thousand inhabitants to complete ruin. In a country where insurances are unknown a visitation of this kind leaves the citizens in beggary.

On traversing the different parts of the town, we saw that whole quarters had been reduced to ashes ; not a wall was standing. In some places, where the buildings had been of stone, may be seen whole streets of what were fine mansions, without roofs or windows, ready to fall before the first wind. Bazaars, counting-houses, stores, the very richest and most important buildings, had all been destroyed. Quarters widely distant from each other, separated by extensive unoccupied spaces,—nay, those standing far apart on opposite sides of the Oopa,—have suffered equally with the centre. The extent of the desolation, however, will not appear wonderful, when it is considered that formerly nearly all the houses were built of wood. For the houses which have been rebuilt, and they are not numerous, nothing but brick and stone have been employed. In the last conflagration twelve hundred houses were burnt, besides churches. The splendid bells have in many instances been saved, but are now sadly humbled, many of them being hung

low, in a wooden frame close to the ground, beside some temporary church.

Toula has long been a city of note in Russian history. From its position on the direct road from the south, it was often pillaged by the Krim Tartars, on their way to Moscow. It was never famous for its fidelity to the Tzars, and paid dearly for the support which it gave to the false Demetrius. These disastrous days, however, have long been past. Under the protection of Peter the Great, it became a place of high importance, and his successors having all continued to protect its artisans by every means in their power, it has risen to such a degree of importance in some kinds of manufacture, that it is now considered the Birmingham of the empire.

Many of the articles made here, such as rings, snuff-boxes, clasps, and other fancy articles, both of steel and iron, have long had a high reputation in all parts of the Continent. The staple branch of industry, however, is the manufacture of fire-arms, which was formerly carried on with such activity that one thousand muskets were delivered weekly for many years. The number now produced is much smaller. It surprised us to find that, instead of having one large establishment, where all the branches of gun-making could be prosecuted together, and where all the workmen could carry on their various departments under proper inspection, nearly all the work is performed by the blacksmiths at their own houses. When one has done to a musket all that belongs to his branch, it is sent away to another, and so on till it has traversed Toula a dozen of times. We thus found hundreds of blacksmiths carrying about mus-

kets from place to place when labouring hours were over. The operations have generally been under the direction of able engineers from England or Scotland; but now there is only one Englishman connected with them, and he is English only in name,—a Mr. Jones, born in Russia, and son of a person originally from this country. The emperor, very wisely, is now trying to keep everything in the hands of natives; it is only from necessity that he still goes abroad for workmen of any description.

A great part of the iron and steel wrought here comes from Siberia; but iron of the best quality is also found in the district itself. The whole soil abounds with ore, and in some places, especially towards the government of Kalouga, it may be reached by the plough. The mines are, in consequence, very easily worked; but, smiling crops having in many districts replaced the once extensive forests, fuel has become so scarce, that the forges are wrought at very considerable expense. Those of the Demidoff family, only fifty versts distant, are still the most important.

The country cannot be described as mountainous, but its undulations are of a much bolder character than is usual in Russia. Notwithstanding its natural wealth, and the great industry of its inhabitants, the government of Toula labours under considerable disadvantages; not the least of which is want of good communications. The Oopa, in spite of the locks and other formidable machinery raised on it, is but a mere puddle.

In fact, there are no large rivers near, and the expensive land-carriage to St. Petersburg and Moscow enhances the price of everything so much that, at a

distance, few can afford to purchase its tempting manufactures. On the spot, however, we found them very cheap. Pretty rings may be had for five or six roubles, and the handsome platina snuff-boxes, which sell very high in Germany, may here be bought for 3*l.* 15*s.* In regard to the fire-arms of Toula, they are of very inferior quality compared with our English guns. Percussion locks, of course, here, as everywhere else, are fast driving all others out of use. Little care, however, is exercised in the selection of the metal for barrels, compared with what is done in England, where old horse-shoes and stubs are in such request for this purpose; or in Spain, where, if stubs or worn metal cannot be had, the blacksmith will hammer down a forty-pound piece of iron to the weight of a common barrel, and make you glad to get it for as many pounds sterling. The boring process, as well as the proving, are also very roughly conducted. The consequence of all which is, that accidents are of frequent occurrence from these guns; and, perhaps, will continue to be so, till a more general diffusion of taste for field-sports encourage manufacturers to produce a superior article. The common gun, like everything common, is always better made where a dear one is sure to find a ready purchaser. Government protection can do much among the Russians; but its encouragement would be more efficient if they had a Marquis of Rockingham to present a Colonel Thornton with a fowling-piece worth four hundred pounds. They show at St. Petersburg some guns of Toula manufacture that are greatly admired; but when will Toula produce an article like Napoleon's famous Versailles guns, worth

two thousand pounds each, or his pistols, valued at four hundred pounds a-piece?

Generally speaking, we did not see much to admire in the Toula workmanship. The things are very slight, and of inferior finish. When used for a while joints were always going wrong, and screws are never a week fit for use. Except the snuff-boxes, few fancy articles receive the labour that would be bestowed on toys in England. *Heavy* things, however—water-pipes, fittings for furniture, &c.—are substantially done.

We found but a sorry inn, compared with what any place of the same size in other countries would have afforded. Our beds were hard sofas; and, after a learned negociation with the waiter, we succeeded in hiring a leather pillow, and even a sheet. The Russians are always greatly surprised that we should trouble ourselves so much about our sleeping; for when they themselves in travelling are so unlucky as to have no bed with them, they tumble unceremoniously down in antechamber, lobby, or kitchen—wherever there is space enough for them to stretch their limbs. Thus, on opening our bed-room door in the morning, we found its vicinity so thickly strewed with men—all of very respectable appearance—that it was not easy to steer through them. Their coats had been taken off, but, except a light wrapper round them, they lay without blanket or covering of any kind. The balcony behind, and the passage to it, were similarly occupied; and in the yard below, under the gateway, among the carriages, by the stable doors, they might be heard snoring as happily as if on beds of down. A Scotchman

from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, who has for thirty years acted as steward to the Davidoff family somewhere near this, when we complained of the wretched state of the Russian inns, told us to be thankful—that *now* we travel luxuriously, compared with the wayfarers of other days, when he used to be compelled to carry not only his beef for dinner, but also the charcoal to cook it with.

However deficient they may be in beds and cleanliness, the inns of all the larger towns generally turn out a very tolerable dinner. Dressed fowls, or something of the kind, may always be laid in at such places, to carry travellers through the country stations, where *nothing* is to be got, except milk or hot water for tea. Unless in the very largest towns, butcher-meat would appear to be very little used. Even in such places as Toula and Zaraïsk a butcher's shop is never seen; a calf with the skin half off is sometimes displayed at a butcher's door, but the sight does not occur above once in two hundred miles. Fish is even more rare than beef; being always sold alive from the river, none is ever exposed in the market-places. Vegetables and milk compose a great part of the diet, in the districts we have now reached. In order to provide themselves with the latter of these articles, most families, even in the towns, keep a few cows. The common herd, therefore—though it was not a little amusing to see village habits retained in such a large place—was to be seen, even at Toula, straggling peaceably home at night, each member, with familiar low and sagacious step, seeking her own stall, as securely as in smaller populations.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CORN-GROWING DISTRICTS OF CENTRAL RUSSIA.

A Russian courier—Great road to the South—Droves from the Ukraine—Dead cattle—Ravens—Forests of the North disappear—Roguish postmaster—Rich corn-country—Habits of the farmers—Their wives—Ignorance—*Mtzensk*—Government of Orel—Array of wind-mills—Astonishing fertility of Central Russia—Immense resources of Russia—Mode of farming—Produce, flocks, and general statistics of the Governments of Riazan, Toula, Orel, and Kursk—Returns of Grain—Compared with those of Scotland, &c.—Landlords—Slow progress of improvements among Russian farmers—The Town of OREL—Its trade—Filthy aspect—Fortifications and general appearance of a town in the interior.

A NIGHT'S rest enabled us to start from Toula with spirits as fresh and buoyant as if we had never been shaken on Russian roads, nor stretched on Russian boards. As we set forth, the other travellers who had lodged in the house over night were anxiously pacing the court-yard in long blue robes, half covered in front with their grisly beards, and eyed us with looks which seemed to say that foreigners had no right to obtain horses while natives were kept waiting for them. But it was not so much our character as foreigners that we had to thank for being readily served as the good management of our courier. A more useful companion we could not have desired. Mr. Lebedeff may, or may not, have believed that all four of us were travelling on important service

of the King of England; but assuredly the representations which he made to the postmasters, of our high and august characters, could not have been more fervent had the emperor himself been guarantee for the truth of his statements on this head. His reasoning seemed to be, that if we were not great personages, his presence made us so. The way in which he treated the postmasters, therefore, was very unceremonious. He did not deign to entreat, or even to explain; a short word, an authoritative command, was all he used. Postmasters, he seemed to think, were made to be bullied, not to be reasoned with; and, whether his theory was correct or not, he always succeeded in procuring horses, when other travellers had to wait. In short, his services were of immense importance to us. It should also be stated, by way of information to those who think Russians can possess no good qualities, that with us he was extremely modest and respectful, obeying every order with the punctuality and silence of a soldier. He was as economical in all disbursements as if the money had been his own; he was also very temperate, and, for fear of appearing intrusive, always kept out of the way when we were at meals. When travelling, the dashing uniform which he wore in the towns was laid aside for a glazed cap, a smart green coat, and grey trousers. The formidable sword was also unbuckled, but only to be conspicuously displayed on the box of the carriage, from whence its varnished scabbard gleamed terror into the hearts of our foes. How he managed to understand what we said to him is a mystery which we cannot pretend to explain; yet, though we knew scarcely a word of each other's

language, our dialogues were often long and agreeable. There were a great many *djasses* and *njeats* in them, and no lack of knowing shakes of the head, and explanatory movements of the hand, which, thanks to the good-nature and intelligence of our patient friend, were so successful, that we never felt any serious inconvenience from our want of the Russian language.

As we sallied forth from Toula, few of its inhabitants were to be seen in the early dawn. A short distance from the southern gate stand the park and holiday grounds of the citizens, who, like the inhabitants of the other towns, have borrowed from France imitation Russian mountains for their amusement in summer, when the real ones, of snow, cannot be had. These contrivances, which form conspicuous objects in most places of popular resort, consist of a couple of lofty wooden towers, with ropes stretched between them, like the chains of a suspension bridge, along which the holiday people glide, in machines contrived for the purpose.

It is seldom that any large body of troops is seen in this part of the interior; but, to our great surprise, we passed, near Toula, an extensive encampment, which the emperor intends to renew every summer.

The road, for a time, was almost impassable, and exceedingly dreary. Ere long, however, its qualities improved, and the dreariness was lightened by numerous droves of cattle from the Ukraine, on their way to the markets of the north. These animals are all greyish-white, and, with their long, spreading horns, are at once seen to be a distinct race from the pure white oxen so frequently met in the north of Russia. While traversing

these central districts, we always found many droves of cattle at rest on the roads in the morning, before commencing their long day's march; they often filled the wide road so completely, that the carriage could scarcely get through them. When the herds stop for the night, the drivers light large fires amongst them in the middle of the road; and by the light of these alone is the traveller enabled to steer his way through the prostrate hundreds. A short way from Toula we found what, when we got farther south, was no unusual sight—an ox left dead on the highway, where it had fallen from the fatigue of a journey of many hundred miles. The ravens which were gorging themselves on the carcase flew away as reluctantly as if they had wished to prove their legal right to the waif; and in many instances they would appear to be the undisputed claimants; for, after the skin is stripped off, the flesh is generally left at their free disposal. So effectual is the process which they adopt with their prey, that in a short time little is left but the heaps of bones which we now found bleaching in every hollow as we passed along.

Long trains of waggons, dragged by bullocks, were now meeting us every half-hour, loaded with casks of tallow. This road altogether presents a singular contrast to the lonely one from Mourom to Riazan; but in many places it is equally bad, especially after a few hours' rain. For a long way here the colour of the road shows the richness of the soil—a fat mould often as black as peat-moss. One rare sight presented itself—a rich wooded dell, such as our eyes had long been strangers to. Near it was the fine seat of some nobleman, which is also a very unusual

sight in Russia. One may travel a hundred miles without seeing a country mansion; in the last four hundred versts which we had traversed we had seen only *two*! The ash now appears for the first time; fine clumps of it are scattered over the declivities. Other hard-wood trees are also seen here, of great size and beauty, in patches often so regular that they would appear to have been planted. The fir, which had been getting more rare, was not seen at all after this (lat. fifty-four degrees north, and about six hundred miles from St. Petersburg).

At *Yassna Poliana*, the first station out of Toulá, we began to experience some of the tricks for which Russian postmasters are famed. Under pretext that the horses were engaged for the governor of the province, it was announced that we must be detained perhaps all day; but fortunately up came the "gubernador" himself, who at once made horses appear. In fact there was a sufficient supply in the stable all the time, but the postmaster wanted a bribe.

The same was attempted at *Solowa*, the next stage. In vain did we threaten to enter a charge against the postmaster in the book kept at every station for that purpose. The postmasters in general know well how to dispose of such complaints—either presenting the wrong book for the traveller to write in, or falsifying the entrance in some way or other. Believing that this personage would treat ours in this way, we had no help for it but to remain kicking our heels in the muddy street of the village. The man vowed that he had not a single horse in the stable. What use murmuring under such

circumstances? At length, however, our Herr Palko-vinck's English blood was roused; a formal complaint was entered, and a letter written to the governor—upon which, when he saw he had more hardy customers to deal with than had been expected, the postmaster's tone at once changed from bluster to cringing entreaty. The horses, which had all the time been in a stable at a short distance from the public one, were forthcoming in an instant. Flattery, supplications, *tears* were employed to soothe us. "Surely we, generous Englishmen as we were, would not injure a poor man and an old soldier." And so we parted the best of friends. Had we once begun with bribery, we should have had to pay double at every stage, many of the postmasters, and our friend here in particular, being notorious for their cupidity. They are so apt to impose on females who may fall into their hands, that few travel without some good courier, like our faithful Lebedeff, who is often sent to take charge of lady-travellers. It is but just to add, however, that, from our own experience, we have nothing bad to say of the postmasters in general. Though we sometimes had to wait a little—seldom above half an hour—till horses came, we never met with incivility. In fact, the emperor and his travelling subjects are to blame for all the roguery of these men; the emperor, because he sends to such situations men who have had respectable characters as non-commissioned officers in the army, giving them a good house, but almost no salary to support them and their families. They are thus compelled to be dishonest in order to live. Russian travellers, again, are to blame, because, in place of using the postmasters civilly, they

treat them like brutes, even when they do their duty ; and never pay them when they stop at their houses, or give any extra trouble !

Near the village of *Serguiyerskoyé* stands the fine mansion of Prince Gagarin, who holds a high official appointment at St. Petersburg. His park is enclosed by a wall—English fashion—the first we had seen in Russia.

The country now improved at every step. Without having seen it, no idea could be formed of its fertility. For many miles it is by far the richest district we had yet been in. Forests having almost entirely disappeared, nothing is to be seen but ridge beyond ridge of the most beautiful corn-land, in many places now stripped of the crop, but still showing what its abundance had been. The young wheat is already coming beautifully through the ground. Wherever the plough has been really at work, the soil may be seen black and rich enough to break an English farmer's heart with envy. And yet there is little reason why an Englishman should murmur at the sight of Russian luxuriance, for nothing strikes us more than the fact, that, precisely in the districts which appear to be naturally the richest, the peasants are always the most wretched. They are poor, downcast creatures, with ragged, dirty clothes. As formerly stated, they are entirely at the mercy of their masters, who, the moment they begin to thrive a little, step in with new demands, and sweep all their savings away.

The morals of the people in these agricultural districts are as low as their circumstances. From the want of religious knowledge, there is no tie to keep them within

the bounds of morality; and, consequently, the number of illegitimate children is very great. Instances of mothers having children to several fathers are also of constant occurrence. Women appear everywhere to share in the most toilsome drudgery of the field; and the practice of beating their wives is so common among the farmers here, as to be altogether disregarded by those who witness the operation going on. "Kindness to women"—using the words employed by an old author in describing another wild race—"is regarded by their husbands merely as spoiling good working creatures." To all appearance his account of the wives of the American Indians will also hold good of the Russian wives; for "commendable is their mild carriage and obedience to their husbands, notwithstanding all this customarie churlishnesse and savage inhumanitie, not seeming to delight in frownes, or offering to word it with their lords, not presuming to proclaim their female superiority to the usurping of the least tithe of their husband's charter, but resting themselves content under their helplesse condition."

Though the peasants of this and the adjoining government of Orel are among the wealthiest in Russia, they do not send to school more than one in every three hundred of the population. There may now and then be found amongst them a boy of twelve or fifteen years old who can read; but of grown-up people, scarcely one knows the alphabet. Present anything printed or written to a farmer, and he puts it away as a thing which in no way concerns him—which he is neither entitled nor expected to understand. In England the boor who can-

not read blushes at least when detected; the Russian peasant does not yet know that there is any shame in being ignorant.

We had a hurried and hungry scene at supper in the post-house of *Scouratovo-Maloyé*, after which we embarked in our frigate for the night; but at dawn, in consequence of renewed rain and abominable roads, we found ourselves only at *Mtzensk*, two stages farther on. This district town, containing six thousand inhabitants, belongs to the government of Orel, and is eighty-six miles distant from Toulá. It presents a range of very handsome houses on a height above the Zousha, which runs through the town. Some manufactures are also carried on, but the greater part of the population live by agriculture, or by the transmission of the products of the south to Moscow.

The information given us at this place by Russian gentlemen, about their ordinary rate of travelling, by no means helped to reconcile us to the snail's pace at which the state of the roads now compelled us to advance. In good weather, natives, when their telegas are well stored with blankets, often travel in this part of the country 1000 versts in four days, or 166 miles in twenty-four hours.

The government of Orel, through which we are now passing, presents one unbroken field of the greatest fertility. There being no enclosures in Russia, and in this part of it few trees, the eye now ranged over mile beyond mile of fields, many of them no longer waving with grain; but the stubble with which they were still clad indicated how rich were the crops they had just

resigned. The great number of windmills would alone suffice to show the fertility of the country. Instead of one at a time, the knight of La Mancha would here have had whole legions of them to fight, some knolls being often completely clad with them. The valiant Don, however, would have found them an easy conquest; for they are such low puny things, that, in spite of their half-dozen tattered sails, the schoolboys are able to arrest them when at their fullest flight—to the great annoyance of the honest miller, who thinks his machinery bewitched, to stop when a good breeze is blowing. Water-mills for grinding corn are also numerous; but, from their position in low hollows along the streams, they are seldom seen from the road. From the same cause, few of the brandy-distilleries, which abound in all of these provinces, are seen by the traveller.

Near one of the farm-houses we passed a merry scene of men, women, and children, thrashing the grain in the open air. A large bed of it is spread on a floor of wood, or of hard earth, round which the happy household sing and beat away with great zeal. This was the first instance we had seen of it; but farther south, in Little Russia, it is a very common sight.

This tract of country is rich beyond all example. The 335 miles from Riazan on to Kursk—a line extending through no less than three large governments, Riazan, Toula, Orel—surpasses all we have seen in any country of Europe. We had not supposed that the earth contained such an immense stretch of the finest cornland, all in the highest cultivation, and without the intervention of a single barren acre. The whole of the soil

may not be equally rich, but, even where its general character is sandy, there is always a mixture of good patches.

What a country this Russia is! was our frequent exclamation while journeying through these rich districts. It is only by travelling in it that one can have any adequate idea of its immense resources. In the north we had been traversing forests fit to build navies to every sea-power in Europe; and now we were in a region which, under proper management, might be the granary of whole kingdoms. As yet, however, agriculture is but in its infancy. There is great *industry*, but little *method*. The peasant toils from morn to night, and leaves not a foot of his land waste; but he has old-fashioned, unwieldy implements—knows nothing of rotations—cropping on from year to year without either a judicious variation of manures, or any attention to soils—and, lastly, he has not a sufficient inducement to do better. He labours for another. Yet, even under every disadvantage, in the government of Orel there are usually *seven* returns, and sometimes *ten*; in Kursk, seldom less than *nine*; in Toula and Riazan *five*.

On consulting the lists of the annual produce of these governments, we found that Orel yielded 8,076,623 tchetverts,* from an average sowing of 1,800,000 tchetverts on 2,163,112 deciatines† of arable land. Kursk yielded 8,169,613 tchetverts, after 1½ million tchetverts sown; Toula 6,616,359 tchetverts, from an average sowing of 1,864,981 on 1,888,317 deciatines; and Riazan

* The *tchetvert* is equivalent to .68 of a bushel, or to 2.73 English pints.

† The *deciatine* corresponds to 2.699 imperial acres.

6,496,316 tchetverts, from 1,827,216 tchetverts, on a total of 1,708,859 deciatines of arable land. Each of these governments is able to export from two to three millions of tchetverts annually. In order to form a correct judgment of the state of agriculture, as shown by these statements, it should be borne in mind that a great portion of the extent given as arable land is often not under a grain-crop, while in some governments a large share of it is occupied by hops, tobacco, hemp, flax, cucumbers, and vegetables of every kind. Many of the farmers also pay great attention to the rearing of horses, sheep, and cattle. Riazan, for instance, contains 334,116 horses, 292,172 head of horned cattle, and 769,976 sheep; Toula, 361,811 horses, 292,559 horned cattle, and 1,066,976 sheep; Orel, 488,853 horses, 287,388 horned cattle, and 631,940 sheep.

By stating that the governments which we were now passing through present such a great breadth of cultivated land, it is not meant that the *whole* surface is under the plough, but merely to give an idea of the general aspect of the country. Thus it appears that in the government of Riazan there are 1,412,691 deciatines covered with forests, 277,486 of pasture, and 236,443 of waste ground; in Toula, 476,326 forest, 213,178 pasture, and 68,469 waste; in Orel, 1,285,008 forest, 329,364 pasture, and 152,538 waste.* Generally speaking, however, the forests are not so extensive as the manufactures and general wants of the region would require. In the government of Koursk, as will afterwards be seen, there

* These statements are taken from General Balachef's report, quoted by the indefatigable Schnitzler.

is not enough of wood for fuel, there being only 80,548 deciatines of forest-land on its whole surface.

Lest it should be thought that the number of returns above stated is very small—and it is certainly small compared with the returns on good land in England and Scotland—we must warn the reader that he is not to compare the produce raised in a country where farming is so imperfect with the returns in countries where farming is carried to the highest state of improvement. The true way is to compare Russia with some country on the Continent, over the greater part of which farming is in a very backward state: with France, for instance, which has as good a soil as the part of Russia now under consideration and a better climate. On doing this, we find that, from his superior industry, the Russian farmer beats the French one completely; for there are few parts of France where, on an average, more than *five* or *six* measures of wheat are reaped from *one* sown, while some of the central districts of Russia, we have seen, yield as many as *ten*.

Even at best, however, this way of valuing crops is so deceitful, that we have tried to obtain some data showing the *produce per acre*, which is by far the best way of judging the quality of a soil, as well as the skill of the agriculturist; but there are no tables of the kind for Russia. Taking the Continent in general, however—excepting Flanders, part of Holstein, perhaps, and the north of Italy—the crops on the best lands, and in the most favourable climates, always fall *one-third short* of the return on the same quantity of good land in England, and are fully *one-half* less than that of the best

lands in Scotland ; thus showing that industry and well-applied capital can make up for an inferior climate. There are few parts of France where the produce of an acre of wheat averages more than fifteen or twenty bushels, or oats above twenty-five to thirty.

The farms in this part of Russia are generally small. The large proprietors are now at much pains to improve the system, by establishing model-farms, and by procuring experienced stewards from other countries ; but there is no creature in the world so unwilling to give up his old fashions as the Russian. He will submit to any burden his master chooses to impose upon him, but he must be allowed to carry it in his own way. Every other nation is changing, and making progress ; the Russian, in most respects, remains where he was.

The remarks which have now been offered will give some idea of the country through which we travelled before reaching OREL, the capital of the government already so often named. It lies 120 miles from Toula, near the white clayey bed of the Okka, and has the filthy stream of the Orlyk stagnating among the long dingy streets of its lower quarter. The town, which formerly reached only to this small river, now spreads a full half-mile beyond it, the population, by the official accounts, having increased eleven thousand in ten years !

The books state that the very flourishing condition of this place is attributable to its being the point where all the provisions necessary for the victualling of Moscow are collected from Little Russia ;—such as grain of every kind, tallow, cattle, pigs, leather, honey, wax, wool—

besides the corn and hemp sent to St. Petersburg for the navy. There are also works for tanning, melting of tallow, weaving, rope-making ; and important fairs are held here occasionally. The Russian statements, however, regarding this as well as other places, are too magniloquent to give any idea of the real state of things. They would make the stranger think that he is to find a Birmingham or a Manchester where there is not business enough to employ the population of half a street in either of those places. We do not deny that this may be a flourishing town, but its look certainly does not indicate great prosperity. In the low quarter many of the houses, which are all of wood, appear to be deserted. The windows of several were cracked and broken, doubtless by the musical fury of the regimental bands, that were rehearsing in them with anything but harmony.

By the sides of some of the fetid waters, putrid beef and offal were exposed, to tempt the soldiers, of whom, infantry and cavalry together, there are four regiments here. The dark bazaar savoured strongly of a Jewish keeping ; and near it is a range of hucksters' shops displaying abundance of tin vessels, ropes, harness, and such like commodities ; but there is not a single shop with the substantial look which one would expect in a place of 31,000 inhabitants, described as being in easy circumstances. The upper town, however, pleased us much more ; for it presents some tolerable streets, and in one of them we found an inn, which, if it provided little else, produced at least a good dinner for those of us to whom any appetite had been left by feverish, and all but sleepless, nights, spent on these horrid roads.

There is plenty of staring *show* in some of the Russian towns, but *comfort* is a word which none would ever employ in speaking of them. They cover too much ground, compared with their population, to allow any part of them to look comfortable. There are not only vast squares and vast streets, out of all proportion with the insignificance of the place, but on journeying to the suburbs, away as would be thought out of the town, there will also be found many long and silent lanes, with low wooden houses on each side, and acres of green grass in the middle—of themselves taking up ground enough for a good-sized town. That such places should be *fortified* is of course out of the question; it would be as easy to fortify Glasgow, with its population of 200,000 souls, as to put walls round a Russian town with only fifteen thousand. In fact, they are well enough fortified, without walls or ditches, at all seasons of the year; in winter by the wastes of endless snow—in spring by impassable swamps—and in summer by the rivers, the forests, and the roads—which latter are of such a kind, that in such a variable climate they cannot be reckoned on for a couple of weeks together, even in the finest months. But though there is no regular fortress in the towns we are now speaking of—even the Kremlins, of which so many were seen farther north, having now disappeared—yet there is always a considerable military force in them. Some are also imperfectly protected by palisades. There is no military pomp observed however; except at the governor's mansion, scarcely a sentinel is to be seen. Neither in entering nor leaving is any trouble given at the gates about passports or luggage. You drive in and

out again, without a single question having been asked, the exhibition of the *padoroshna* to the postmasters being sufficient to secure all that the traveller wants. In case of need, however, the authorities, when waited upon, are not only very courteous, but most ready to yield every assistance to the stranger.

CHAPTER XX.

GLANCE AT THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS ON THE COSSACK BORDER.

Comforts of a large Carriage—Wretched Climate—Account of the Post-houses in this part of Russia—Of the Roads—Method of Driving—Koursk—Beautiful situation—Analysis of the Population of a Russian Town—Government Functionaries—The Russian Apothecary—Polish Prisoners—Population of the Government of Koursk—Crops—Climate improves—Game—*Medwenka*—Approach to Little Russia—Manners of the Little Russians—Order—Cleanliness—*Oboyane*—Hand-plastering—Pretty Cottages—New People—Pleasant Travelling—Serenade from the Sirens of Yakowbevo—Russian Singing compared with Italian—BisLgorod—Ancient wisdom.

FROM Orel, two roads lead to Odessa; one, going some hundred versts round by Kieff, another, nearly direct, by Poltava. We preferred the latter; but, before setting out, it became necessary to repair our carriage—for the third time since we left Moscow, besides sundry minor refittings. Considering what the Russian work is, it is only surprising that springs, axles, crane-neck, and all, did not give way long before.

For the benefit of future travellers, it should be told, that in Russia they ought always to have a vehicle in which, to use a homely phrase, they can *pack well together*. It was not from want of room, but from having too much, that we suffered most; we sprawled about so loosely, that every jolt was like to throw us out on the road. The luggage was also another source of annoy-

ance. No ropes could have kept it from shifting, in such paths. It is customary to fasten exposed articles with chains, in consequence of the character which the Russians have of stealing luggage placed behind, by cutting the ropes in night travelling; but all the chains that we employed were scarcely sufficient to keep things from shifting. We did not meet with a single instance of pilfering, however, during the whole journey, though articles were constantly left exposed in the carriage, and large trunks were so loose, that they could easily have been removed.

We set forth from Orel in the evening, and after bidding adieu to the Okka, which is here so shallow that we forded it in the carriage without much danger, found ourselves in an open, highly cultivated country. The mangled, stunted line of willow trees on the roadside, by no means gives a just idea of the fertility of the soil. But though the fields around bore every appearance of having yielded an early and abundant crop, we found no reason to praise the climate. We had been assured that it would here change greatly for the better; but when night came on, we thought ourselves still far from the promised south. It was so cold and frosty, that we sat shivering in the blast, and we had difficulty in persuading ourselves it was not December. "How can you blame us, poor Russians," said a friend, "for loving Italy so well? with such a detestable climate, and such people to live amongst, nobody would remain here if they could help it. You are now in a part of Russia which ranks among the most favoured provinces of the empire, both in regard to climate and soil; yet you see what that fine

climate is! The cold and rain which you have been travelling in for the last few days were frost and snow at St. Petersburg, and this before the harvest is finished in the warm districts, and long before it has begun in the cold ones! We have the worst climate in the world." "And England the best," murmured somebody; "what can tempt people to leave it?"

Fortunately, horses were now so quickly procured at all the stations, that we had not the additional vexation of delay to complain of. The post-houses on the whole of this south-road are very good; generally they are handsome houses of one story, with several lofty, well-aired rooms. There is not much furniture in them, but still enough to show that if there were more travellers of rank, or were those that travel in the habit of stopping at such places over-night, the long, leathern sofa, and the three or four cane chairs, would soon be increased to the ordinary comforts of wayside taverns. Though these places are generally situated in populous villages (for it is very seldom that one is found standing by itself), yet we never witness any fighting or dram-drinking at them: by night and day they are as quiet as private dwellings.

The average length of the stages here is seventeen English miles; none are shorter than eleven miles. From the inequality of the roads, the ground got over in an hour is constantly varying. From five in the evening till nine in the morning we had sometimes accomplished about seventy miles; but this was the best we had yet done. The roads are no longer the soft green tracks of our Tartar cross-cut; from the constant passing of heavy loads, and numerous droves of cattle, the whole

wide space is now one poached gutter, with a wheel-mark here and there, which the yemtchik follows for a little, till he perhaps finds himself in a slough,—when he flounders out as he best can, and seeks a safer bottom in the surrounding depths.

The Russians are very cautious on coming to a declivity; the drag is always put on where there is the least slope: Norwegian or Swedish whips would drive *full gallop* down places ten times more steep; for they deem the drag such an unnecessary invention, that, if allowed, they will take a traveller all through their land of rocks and mountains without one. The Russians are also at a little more pains in measuring their roads than their friends just named; for at one side of the road, at the end of every verst, they place a wooden column eight feet high, painted white, with black figures at the top, those on one side showing the distance from the last station, those on the other the number of versts still remaining to the next. These are kept up with great care; but, from the width of the road, it is often impossible to read them, even from its centre. A little more care in *making* the roads would be fully as praiseworthy as all this wooden array for measuring them.

After much hard work, we at length reached KOURSK, a town of 22,000 inhabitants, and capital of the government to which it gives its name. We were more pleased with this orderly city than with any other place in this part of Russia. The houses, filling a broad valley, and climbing beautifully up the ample receding slopes of a surrounding circle of heights, are intermixed with orchards and gardens in the liveliest manner. It has

altogether a more compact and finished look than most of the towns we had lately visited. Two heavy white columns, surmounted by emblematic groups, mark the northern entrance ; from which a well-paved street leads down to a central point, surrounded by bazaars and market-places. Here another street of stone houses strikes away at a right angle, down one side of the valley and up the other, till it terminates in a showy triumphal arch, very finely situated on the summit of the ridge. From this handsome street many small ones branch off, and run in straight lines along the declivity, which is so completely covered with a succession of terraces, one rising above the other, that from the east side of the valley it presents a beautiful variety of white churches, and their blue cupolas, mingling among villas adorned with pillared verandahs, or nestling among trees and flowers. Looking back from the arch, after crossing the valley, the slope on which we first stood presents an equally beautiful appearance.

This place is also remarkable for having one of the handsomest inns in Russia ; but as it was shut for repairs, we had to put up with indifferent quarters at a second-rate traktir. Several people, as we drove from the gate, came to offer lodgings, of which we did not meet with another instance in any part of the country.

The streets are generally paved, and the principal ones have even a footpath. Both at night and early in the morning they presented more of the bustle of a large town than any place we had been in since leaving Nishnei. The fruits of the district are said to be good ; but in the market we found none except tolerable apples

and bad pears. In the market-place were several gipsy women, as tawny and ragged as usual. Like all the rest of their tribe, they seem to have no idea of applying themselves to any of the regular work of a market, but live by picking up things thrown away as refuse.

Cloth, linen, and leather are made here ; and the trade with the Ukraine leaves a share of the benefits which it confers on so many other towns along this line. Besides those engaged in trade, however, there are a great many respectable families who derive their incomes from other sources. To give some idea of the population of a Russian town, we may state, that first comes the governor ; he always has the best house. Then comes the bishop—for the capital of every government boasts of one—he has the next best house. At a long distance from the wealth of these dignitaries follow the superior officers of the various regiments, of which several are stationed here and in similar places. The judges, and heads of departments, tax-collectors, &c., must next be named. Under these is a second class of officers, numerous without end. Generally speaking, there are very few private individuals of independent fortune in Russian towns. In English towns, those who live by government appointments form an imperceptible portion of the higher population ; but in Russian ones they constitute the majority. There may be a few rich merchants, but they have no station in society ; a man may be worth thousands of pounds of yearly income, and pay hundreds of weekly labourers, yet be a nobody, because he wants the honour-giving attributes derived from birth or a government appointment. Doctors, even, are scarcely men of much note in such places. As for parsons, they live, if married, in

hovels ; or, if single, in barracks, called convents. Lawyers play but a very small part in Russia, the emperor himself being both lawgiver and lawyer to his people.

But in this analysis of the more respectable part of the population of a Russian town, we have omitted one conspicuous personage—the apothecary. He is always among the wealthiest of the place. None can sell drugs without a patent ; and as only one or two in a provincial town, willing to gain their bread in this way, have influence enough to obtain the emperor's permission, there is but little opposition in the trade. Nothing is paid for the patent, so that the free profits of such a business are often very large. A German, whose daughter is married to the second apothecary of a government town near this, told us that he had seen his son-in-law's books, and seldom found the profits less than 32,000 roubles (or more than 1200*l.*) a-year ; while the first apothecary, as our informant asserted, draws 50,000 roubles, or 2000*l.* a-year. He instanced a smaller town, in which the two dealers in physic draw 15,000 and 25,000 roubles respectively. There are other parts of the continent where apothecaries are equally wealthy ; as in German towns, where they are always among the richest citizens.

After the late war in Poland, Koursk was one of the places to which those unfortunate nobles were sent to reside, against whom no proof could be got sufficient for transporting them to Siberia. Alas for these ill-fated men ! There are hundreds of them still scattered over the towns of Russia, almost in beggary—pining in hopeless inactivity, far from the fair possessions which their Russian conquerors are seizing as their own. And what are their crimes ? They are suspected—not *convicted*, but

merely *suspected*—of having favoured the rebellion; and in Russia, suspicion is reason strong enough for hunting a man from house and home.

To this imperfect sketch of the population of the town of Kursk, it may not be out of place to add an abstract of that of the government, which, though brief, will give the reader a general idea of the way in which the rural population of this part of Russia is composed. It should be premised, however, that there are few governments in which so many *free* husbandmen will be found: in place of the *thousands*, as here stated under that head, most of the governments through which we have passed do not contain many more than the same number of *hundreds*. The large proportion of freemen here is owing to the influx of independent settlers from the adjoining country of Little Russia, where the system of slavery established in Russia has never been known. In other respects the list, which contains only the *male* population, differs little from those which have been published of the other governments:—

<i>Nobles</i>	5,358
<i>Clergy</i>	6,990
<i>Merchants</i>	5,605
<i>Artisans</i> and <i>Raznocihintsi</i> (people of various professions)	8,657
<i>Odnodvortses</i> (free husbandmen)	239,881
<i>Belonging to the military colonies</i>	19,596
<i>Serfs</i>	311,073
<i>Gipsies</i> (Bohemians)	151
<i>Yemtchiks</i>	2,972

In all, 600,283 males.

Generally speaking, the people of this favoured district are much more comfortable than those of the adjoining ones; and the wheat, hemp, tobacco, hops, and other productions of their fertile soil, would be still more profitable, but for the want of navigable communications with the purchasing districts.

We left the really beautiful town of Kursk accompanied by two excellent companions,—the sun, which we had not seen for many a day, and a Russian friend who had accepted of a seat in our carriage some way back, and continued with us for several days in this part of our journey. As he spoke French with the ease so common here among all people of rank, his society proved a great acquisition.

At this point the climate really improves (lat. $51^{\circ} 43'$): we had not a drop of rain during the remainder of our journey; and though we travelled nearly every night, we never knew after this what cold was.

On getting through the first twelve miles of light sand, the country once more becomes a fertile and busy scene. Except a few pretty clumps in the distance, wood is now so scarce that we begin to prize even the lines of poor willows along the road. Behind these, however, waved fields of the richest corn, with long stalk and heavy ear: great part of the crop was already cut, and the rest was fast falling beneath the scythe and the sickle. There being no game-laws here, to make poachers, there is great abundance of game all over these regions; every body, lord or boor, may kill what and where he pleases. The wolves and foxes, however, are the best sportsmen, and

most effectually keep down every description of large game; even hares are scarce. Partridges are very plentiful, but the people prefer killing the quails, which are an easier prey.

At *Medwenka*, twenty-four miles on, though still in the government of Kursk, we were reminded that we were approaching a new country, and almost a new people. We were now leaving what is known as Great Russia, and were approaching the confines of Little Russia, but more particularly that part of it called the Ukraine, in which—though now under the same government—manners, language, and institutions are completely different from those of the country we have been traversing. One of the great points of difference between the Muscovite and the Little Russian, is his cleanliness, and it was one of the first to strike us. The people of the village just named attracted our attention by their smart appearance. The cottages, too,—rare treat to an English eye,—are actually whitewashed! The spire of the showy church is a great ornament to the wide hollow covered by the village. The language of the people sounds differently from what we had been accustomed to, but all understand Russian.

Oboyane, sixteen miles farther south, is an insignificant district town, straggling over some steep banks of white clay. The population is said to be five thousand. For want of soldiers, some town-police were doing duty at the guard-house, awkwardly enough. The passion for cleanliness and order obviously increases as we advance; for the women—probably because their husbands were bearing arms for the emperor in the market-place—were

busy repairing their clay-built mansions, some plastering the holes with their hands (not very cleanly work, we must admit), while others were carefully coating with whitewash the parts which had become dry.

The cottages seen by the wayside after we passed this place have a tidy look, glittering white through the trees, and they are as clean inside as out. They are nearly all thatched with straw or tough grass, the walls very low, the roof high and tapering. At *Kotchetovsky-Potchtovy-Dvory* (a lovely little Russian name), another most wonderful sign of improvement became obvious—clean shirts. In other respects there is little change in the dress: the first one thousand miles from St. Petersburg should be called the country of sheepskins and dirt.

Hark! a dog barks. We cannot tell when we heard one before. They are now to be seen at every door. The passing peasant begins to salute us—as much as to say, “Strangers are rare in our land; it is not every day that we see a caravan with four Englishmen in it.”

What crops! never have we seen wheat so rank and close on the ground. The roads, too, improve with the soil. As we now sent our courier on before us in a telega, to order horses, they were always ready at the inns the moment we arrived. We could now with safe conscience call out “skurry! skurry!” “pashol! pashol!” to the yemtchik; formerly we were ashamed to hurry him—it would have been more becoming to have dismounted and put our shoulder to the wheel, to help him out of the yawning ruts. “Skurry! skurry!” and on he goes, with a merry tale to his steeds, or a song as long as the stage, and as sweet as if it came all from his nose. He

wonders greatly—yea, grins with delight—on seeing one of our party take the reins. Such a thing was never heard of in Russia till now. The lad on the front pair looks back, perfectly confounded, and fully believes that the people capable of such an innovation will next ask one of the horses to step inside.

At nine o'clock *Yakowbevo* yielded us a supper of milk and eggs; while the village-girls, all wearing a kind of gipsy turban, which is common here, treated us with a serenade—the first instance we met with of a custom universal in Little Russia. These damsels are so mad about music, that in the short darkness of summer, they sing literally all the night through. Here they come accordingly, in full force. A band of them returning from the harvest-field, linked arm-in-arm, and with a measured step, are marching past our door, singing a low drowsy air, quite different from that we heard so incessantly among the Muscovites; and in which, though we had occasionally had songs from very young girls, we never heard the grown-up women join. This evening song was not, indeed, quite so sweet as that of Milton's "sirens three,"

" Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul
And lap it in Elysium ;"

but it was more tolerable than the singing with which we were so often assailed in other parts of this musical country. The Russian is essentially a singing animal. Scourge him till he howl again, and, be assured, his wonted drawl about grandmother and the goose is resumed before you have turned the corner. Talk of

Italy! Russia shall henceforth be the land of song. You may travel from one end of Italy to the other, and never hear a peasant, man or woman, carol a single air. Even in the large towns, unless from some bacchanalian party going home from a glee-club or the theatre, the traveller seldom hears Italians singing. They keep all their notes to themselves, to make us pay dear for them in London. Among the Russians, on the other hand, nothing but singing greets the unhappy traveller's ears, from Cronstadt to Odessa. Wearisome as our postilions' songs had always been, they became even more irksome to us after we learnt that the words, if words they can be called, which they consist of, have not the smallest meaning. It would be impossible to draw any kind of sense from their most favourite songs.

In some parts of the country ballads of considerable beauty may still be heard; but they are now very scarce. Many of these, according to Karamsin, "are exceedingly beautiful, and especially those of a historical nature. They generally relate to the happy times of St. Vladimir, and were composed during the subjugation of our empire—in those disastrous days when the imagination, weighed down beneath the yoke of the infidel, had no other spur than the remembrance of the eclipsed glory of the country. The Russian," he most truly adds, "sings in joy, and even in the midst of sorrow."

Yakowbevo was still ringing with its twilight songs, as we once more sallied out to spend a night on the highway. A rapid drive soon brought us to the fair city of

BIELGOROD. The moonlight, which slept on its towers, gave it for the moment a double title to the appellation of the white city ; and the peaceful Ziolka, a small tributary of the Don, which laves the walls, was looked on by us with more respect, from its being the only stream of any note that occurs for some hundred miles in this part of our journey.

This city was once a place of much importance, and was often the subject of contest between Tartar and Cossack ; but, with a population of only seven thousand inhabitants, it has now dwindled down from the rank of a capital into a district-town of Koursk. At two in the morning, the hour at which we passed through it, we had little opportunity of sympathising with its inhabitants on their fallen dignity, but were glad to learn that, in times of old at least, the Bielgorodians enjoyed a high reputation for wisdom, as appears by the following extract taken from the historian who has just been quoted :—“ The Petcheneges, while besieging Bielgorod (*anno* 997), cut off all communication between it and the surrounding country so completely, that famine soon began to be felt among the besieged, who at last assembled and showed a desire to surrender themselves to the enemy. ‘ The prince is far from us,’ said they ; ‘ the Petcheneges will put only a few of us to death, while all of us will perish by famine.’ In this critical conjuncture they were saved by the stratagem of one of their old men. This person had caused two wells to be dug, at the bottom of which he placed a couple of tubs, one of which was filled with honey, the other with dough. He

now sent to invite the more distinguished of the enemy to meet him, as if intending to enter on a negociation for surrender. On seeing these wells, however, the deputies fancied that it was the soil itself which produced food and drink so excellent; and they returned to their prince, spreading the tidings that the city could not be reduced by famine; so that the Petcheneges prudently abandoned the siege."

CHAPTER XXI.

JOURNEY AMONG THE COSSACKS OF THE UKRAINE.

The warm south—The UKRAINE—Mazeppa—Wolf-hunt—KHARKOFF—Its sands—University—Its fair—Articles sold—Caviar, how procured—Sketch of a Jew money-changer—The penny-shows—Panorama—Dancing dogs—The emperor and his passion for travelling—The cavalry colonies—Singular burial-places—Fertility of the Ukraine—Evening encampment of a travelling herd—Description of the ox of the Ukraine—*Lubotin*—The Mule—Russian Wyoming by moonlight—Night singing—*Valky*—Music of the poultry—Exaggerations about Russia—Travellers' tales—State of agriculture in the Ukraine—No manure—The *Kourgans* or tombs of the south of Russia—Various theories about these ancient monuments—Herodotus—Major Rennell.

THE south ! the warm south ! We had been shivering with cold during the whole of our night journey ; but with dawn came the sun and warmth. We felt relieved, and at last could breathe with comfort. After travelling so long in the land of mud, rain, and cold, so new was the feeling of enjoyment, that we could have flung our caps in the air, and danced for joy.

In sober phrase, the change of temperature here is most perceptible. The climate, which had gradually been improving, was now most delightful. At this point, also, the vegetation of the south first became apparent ; the shrubs, the flowers, the fruits, have the luxuriance of another clime. Many of them are new, and all are more abundant. It was literally as if, in a single night, we had passed from the frozen to the torrid zone.

The reader, then, must forgive our raptures. Are we not, too, in the Ukraine, the land of freedom? for no Cossack is a serf, like the degraded Russian peasant—the land of romance and of wild adventure; for it is the land of Mazeppa, with whom, had we been able to lay hands on another “Tartar of the Ukraine breed,” we could now have exclaimed:—

“ Away!—away!—My breath was gone,
I saw not where he hurried on;
’Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam’d—away!—away!

* * * * *

Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A thousand horse—and none to ride!
A thousand horse;—the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o’er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on.”

Our thoughts of Mazeppa, however, were interrupted by a sight which made us regret that, though now in the very land where all this happened, yet we could not get hold of one of these steeds; for a good opportunity of putting him to his mettle presented itself soon after we entered this romantic region. A wolf—a famous fellow, tall and gaunt as a Scottish grenadier—was seen crossing the road, not many yards before us, with a large lamb in his mouth. Altogether this was as cool a piece of impertinence as we ever witnessed; for not only were several passengers near at the time, but the fields in which he seized his victim were quite close to some populous villages. So far from being in a hurry, he ambled away at a pace which made us expect to get at him with pistol-shot, and on foot. Forth sped the

gallant huntsmen to the chase; but he was not to be so easily caught. There was a long range of steep cornland before him, with people at work on different parts of it, ploughing for the new crop; but he dreaded neither them nor the hill. Pursuit made him quicken his pace through the new-shorn stubble, but did not frighten him. Grasping the creature more firmly, he took to the climb—slanted most knowingly to ease it—gave a scowl of contempt at some curs which the work-people sent off to make him drop his mutton—turned his head half-round, now and then, to wish his pursuers joy of the sport he was giving them—and so, without so much as once letting the lamb out of his mouth to rest himself, he was quietly gaining the top, laughing at pistols, peasants, dogs, Englishmen, and all, when an unexpected foe came in the way—a large black dog, which got so near as to make him drop his seizure. Had this scene occurred in a lonely district, it would not have been worth mentioning: but it shows the singular audacity of the wolf, to have attempted the theft in open day, with houses all round, and among fields full of labourers. The people, however, give themselves very little trouble about a sight which is of daily occurrence, in a district where wolves are as plentiful as the magpies which we saw swarming on every hedge and every house. Bones of cattle were so thickly strewn on the road, that there seemed to be enough of carrion both for bird and beast.

This scene presented itself soon after we had left the village of *Liptzy*, the country near which fully confirms all we had heard of the riches and dense population of the Ukraine. A short way from the road is a considerable

height covered with wood, by the foot of which there runs literally a string of villages, some of them with at least one thousand inhabitants. For nearly fifteen miles there is not a single break in this populous line, one village joining on to the other by means of detached houses. It is, in fact, the most populous track that we recollect in any country. Every inch of land is under crop, and every hand busy; but even with all this industry, the soil that can support such a population must be of no ordinary fertility.

These rich scenes at last brought us to KHARKOFF, the capital of the Ukraine, 134 miles distant from Kursk. The outskirts of the town present some very good buildings, especially an hospital and a lunatic asylum, adjoining each other, both highly spoken of for their excellent arrangements. The university is also said to be very flourishing. Nor need the reader start at the announcement: why should not the Ukraine have a university, as well as a scientific association, all very well lodged in large, dull, white buildings? The information that the university is in such a thriving state, we could hardly reconcile, however, with the fact, that though there are upwards of ninety professors or teachers connected with it, yet there are only somewhere about three hundred students in attendance. But the anomaly was explained by the circumstance, that many of the university people are employed in correspondence, and business of various kinds, connected with the wide extent of country over whose educational interests this *alma mater* watches. The Crimea, Astrakhan, the Caucasus! form part of her charge, to say nothing of the Cossacks

of the Don and those of the Black Sea. At all events, in case of a challenge from these youths, as fiery, doubtless, in literature, when they do devote themselves to it, as their sires in war, our phalanx would have been able to have made a most respectable appearance. One heavy-armed Oxonian, ready to do battle in all love and honour; two skirmishers, fresh from the fields of academic strife in Germany; and, most trustworthy of all, our gallant colonel, who in controversy as in war,

“ ————— so well can bear

His lance in fight, and dart the flying spear ;”

these, we thought, would surely be strength sufficient to cope with the foe in any reasonable onslaught.

The chief part of the town lies in a wide slope looking to the south. The streets, and the deserts (nicknamed squares) surrounded by houses, are as ample as usual, but with the uncomfortable addition of sand—oceans of it, so wide and deep, that the laden steers, many of which were entering from every side, could scarcely wind through it with all their patience. The dust was flying so disagreeably, that we wondered how people could live in such noxious whirlwinds. Let a breeze spring up, and the wilds of Africa can scarcely be worse; life in such a place must lose all sweetness. Yet there is no accounting for Russian perversity. So far from being deserted, Kharkoff is both very showy and prosperous,—as we soon began to discover, by the busy fair which was going on near the quarter where we found shelter, at one of the best hotels in Russia. The streets and squares in this part of the town were filled with lines of booths, and open tables loaded with goods, ranged so

thick,* that we could scarcely make our way through them.

Several fairs are held here in the course of the year, and during the time that these continue, the stationary population of fourteen thousand is increased by many thousands belonging to the various Cossack tribes, who flock thither from all the surrounding districts to buy and sell. The sales at one of these meetings are valued at more than £800,000. The official statement from which this is taken adds, that the sales of wool make up at least a third of this sum. The wool sold here is chiefly raised from the flocks of Merino sheep, now spread all over the south of Russia,—but towards the Crimea, in particular,—and partly from Silesian fleeces. Cotton and silks do not figure for much in the account; indeed, the commerce, generally speaking, is of a much more humble character than that of Nishnei, the articles being chiefly of the kind suited for an agricultural population. Farming implements of every description, from wooden ploughs and pitchforks to rude beams for the horse's neck, were strewed about in great profusion. The quantity of iron articles surprised us; there was a greater bulk of them than of anything else. Church bells, a curious stock to bring to a market, heavy and new, were exposed in considerable numbers. Coarse cloths and cotton stuffs occupied some temporary booths. The groceries were in a handsome bazaar. Fish of all kinds constitute a valuable portion of the stores: besides our old friends, the sturgeon and sterlet dried, we here found some other varieties of the sterlet tribe.

Large casks of *ikrî*, or caviar, were also displayed in

the sun—an article of such importance in Russia, that it cannot be dismissed without more explicit notice. There were immense stores of it at Nishnei, also; but we were there too much occupied with other matters to think of vulgar fish-roes. Of this singular dainty, great quantities are consumed all over the empire. It is fortunate for the Russians that, with their great predilection for every thing of the fish kind, their seas are stored with an unexampled profusion of fish. The sea of Azoff is perhaps the most abundant in fish of all the seas or lakes of the known world. The Caspian and Volga, as formerly stated, are also munificently stocked; while the mouth of the Don literally swarms with the small sirga, of which many were in the market here, hard and dry as a piece of fir-bark. This is the fish of the poor; just as the costly fishes formerly mentioned are those of the rich; to the latter, also, must exclusively belong the ikri now spoken of. It is of consequence, also, as an export; for, though there is an article nearly similar, well known on the shores of the Mediterranean, under the name of “botargo,” and made much in the same way, from the roes of a species of mullet, yet the Russian article is often sent to Italy. Germany and France take considerable quantities, and England a little, but so little, that, for the information of some of our readers, it may be necessary to state that caviar is a shining brown substance, in small grains, exactly like those of bramble-berries nearly ripe. In order to make it, first catch your sturgeons: it is a long way to go, but in the month of March they are to be found in millions, on their spawning beds in the mouth of the Danube, the Dnieper, the Don,

or the Volga, where both nets and hooks are employed against them. Then open your sturgeon, and if a good one, you will find in her probably three millions of eggs. Having removed all the membranes of the roe, wash the grains with vinegar, or with what, as travellers can tell to their cost, is not unlike vinegar, the cheap white wines of the country. Next spread them to dry in the open air; after which you must rub in salt enough to burn a Russian mouth; then put them in a bag, and press the juice out. Finally, pack them into wide-mouthed casks, bring them to the fair here at Kharkoff, and you will make a fortune by them; for the profits are said to be very great. After all, it is not worth the money; it is a bitter, cucumber-tasted stuff. It is eaten raw, with oil and lemonjuice, and tastes worse than Hamburgh herrings or Swedish salmon. It is one of the most valuable articles of Russian trade, however; the sales, external and internal, being probably rather above than below the annual value of two millions sterling. An inferior kind is made from the roes of other large fish.

Among the stalls in the streets of Kharkoff we found a great many small tables, kept by money-changers. In most of the towns we lately visited we had seen such, even in the ordinary market-place, and, true to the calling of his race, we always remarked that each was kept by a Jew. Here he sits, in beard and gaberdine, exposed to sun and wind, on a three-legged stool—gloomy and unsocial, holding converse with none—not a creature near him, yet the happiest of all the passing crowd; for his eyes are gloating over what to him is dearer than friend or human converse—his heart's blood, his idol, his

golden calf, his first love and his last—his *money*. If he speaks it is only in mutterings to himself, as he eagerly counts over pile after pile, sliding the pieces rapidly from palm to palm—carefully though, not to *wear them*. So well does he love his pelf, that he cannot part with enough to clothe and feed himself, as is shown by his scanty apparel and spare frame; yet he is said to be rich. It could not be inferred, however, from all that is here seen; the whole of the piles of crown-pieces and copper before him are scarcely worth twenty pounds British, and the shabby deal table on which they are displayed, with the stool he sits on to the bargain, are certainly not worth as many pence. He is a *careful* man, your Jew, and indulges in no superfluities; for people see money as well on a greasy fir board as on a mahogany counter; besides, all the world knows that he has plenty *at home*. The profits he here makes, a trifling per centage on changing notes into silver, and silver into small copper, would be nothing to an avaricious man: this is merely his sign-board, his place of call. It is in the dark, behind the curtain, that he operates,—lending money himself, or finding a friend to lend it, on such *reasonable* terms, that in many provinces the needy nobles of Russia, like the nobles of other lands, writhe hopelessly in the gripe of the children of Israel. In the Ukraine, however, Jews are not so numerous as in some of the other distant governments of Russia. In Podolia, for instance, bordering on Bessarabia and Gallicia, there are nearly one hundred and forty thousand of them.

Leaving the Jew, however, and his table, wondering only that some furious bullock or drunken moozik does

not kick it down, kopeeks and all, among the sand,—let us next take a peep at the shows; and this we do on the principle already hinted at in these pages, that travellers who do not mix with the people have not the smallest right, when they come home, to say one word about the national character of those among whom they have been sojourning. For such tourists there is a much better way of travelling than that of getting a passport from Lord Palmerston, and crossing the Channel with it: it is to get a passport for their carriage, and send the well-furnished vehicle to make the tour of the continent, while *they* are lounging at home.

Behold us then among the penny-shows, and glad we are at having gone; for had we not paid this visit we should not have been able to do justice to the people of this part of Russia. The Little Russian is one of the most mirth-loving creatures alive; he is more fond of amusement even than his brother in the north; the moment the rake or the whip is out of his hand he must have a frolic. We were now in the midst of a large crowd of them, all idle, and all come to enjoy themselves; yet to their credit be it told, *not one of them was intoxicated*. They are not nearly so much addicted to drinking as the people we had left.

There is much more provided here in the way of amusement than at Nishnei. One of the shows was curious enough: many Englishmen would have probably recognised it as an old acquaintance;—it was a panorama of Constantinople, which began its career in London, and after making the tour of all the capitals of Europe, had now come to close its days among the

Cossacks of the Ukraine ! In other corners trumpet and drum announced the usual muster of peeps, giants, jugglers, dogs,—and such dogs ! all drilled by a man as stiff and as solemn as his master the emperor at a review. The weeping philosopher himself would have laughed had it only been to see how the Russians enjoyed the grave bowing of the dogs, their dignified politeness, their courtly minuets, their coach-driving, their love-making, their flounces, their petticoats, their red uniforms. Then there was the puppy with the impudent tail and dubious attire. Oh ! wonderful dogs, and more wonderful puppies ! A lady, who came with her children, seemed to wonder that Englishmen could care for such things. *Nihil humanum, &c.*, might have been our apology ; but, probably, though she had understood Latin, she would not have allowed the philosophic maxim to extend to dogs, even when dressed in petticoats and surtouts.

The emperor, whom we have been forgetting for so long a time, seemed determined not to forget us. He was the first man we met in the Baltic, and he was now likely to be among the last we should see in the empire ; for here he was again near us, on his way to Tchougouieff. Of what other monarch could the same rapidity of movement be reported ? Two months before we had met him near a hundred miles at sea ; and now he was chasing us through a district nine hundred miles from his capital—about as far as the farthest town in the British dominions is from London. To him such a journey is nothing. He travels more in a week than all the other sovereigns of Europe have done in their whole lives.

He was now on his way to inspect the famous Cavalry

Colonies, of which several are in this government. The principal districts of them are Tchougouieff, Koupiansk, Starobielsk, and Isoum. According to Tanski's *Tableau du Système Militaire de la Russie*, "each division is composed of four regiments, constituting six squadrons for active service, three squadrons of reserve, three squadrons of tenant colonists, one of cantonists; in all thirteen. The strength of each division of colonized cavalry may be reckoned at five thousand horse." So much, however, has been already published on these colonies, that, as we had no opportunity of learning anything new on the subject, it is unnecessary to enter into further details.

The blacksmith having strengthened our carriage by the addition of sundry bolts, and the post-master having supplied us with five fine greys, when leaving Kharkoff, we dashed through its streets in great style, in spite of break-neck ruts and heavy sand. The horses, hitherto, had been poor worn-out creatures: but throughout the whole of the several hundred miles we had still to travel they were large and in high condition.

Soon after leaving the town we were struck with the sight of some simple burial-places. They present merely a few little knolls in the wood, or close by the wayside, without a fence to protect them, or a stone to mark the boundaries; are browsed by the cattle, and crossed very nearly by the carts: in short, nothing but a few wooden crosses tell that here rest the former tenants of some adjacent village.

When the first sandy stretch was passed, we were again reminded that we were in the fertile Ukraine.

The crops had been gathered in, but it was easy to see that the soil we were travelling through is one of the finest in the world. It is so rich, that our notes, taken on the spot, at this place, contain repeated entries of "Wonderfully productive!" "What crops they have been reaping!" "Never have seen such a rich tract!" &c.

Again must we exclaim what a country this is! And yet what we here see is nothing to the scenes of fertility said to be presented in other parts of Little Russia. We can now understand with what reason the merchants of Odessa assert that, were the farming in Russia improved a little, they would be able to feed England, even were half the land turned into hunting-fields.

The convoys of cattle and waggons with provisions, of which we had met many throughout the whole of the last three or four hundred miles that we had travelled, here became larger and more numerous. The sun was setting as we entered one of them, which had halted for the night, and presented a scene which, with all its picturesque concomitants, would have made an admirable subject for the pencil. The oxen had been unyoked from the waggons, and allowed to mingle with the droves wandering loose in the fields. Many, wearied by the long march, had sunk down in the ruts; and the large half-gnawed heads and thigh-bones both of oxen and horses, scattered among the surrounding bushes, relics of former night-droves, showed how probable it was that some of the poor brutes which we were now disturbing with our wheels would not join the forward throng in the morning. But the blank would soon be supplied, there

being always with each train several draught-oxen as a relay in case of accident. Fires had been lighted at different points in the wide bivouack ; and at some of these the waggoners were preparing their meal ; while at others the blacksmiths of the band had pitched their implements, and were busy repairing the damages of the day. We had been told that there was danger in passing these convoys at night ; but neither here, nor in passing through others at later hours, when it was much darker, did anything occur to us of a nature to confirm the charge.

Flocks of oxen meet the traveller in the Ukraine so frequently that we cannot dismiss them without more particular mention. They are destined for the markets of Moscow and St. Petersburg ; the one five hundred, and the other nine hundred miles distant. If many die in this long journey, the price obtained for the survivors fully covers the loss. A drover whom we questioned said he would get nine pounds at St. Petersburg for an ox which he would have parted with at Kharkoff for forty shillings.

The Ukraine ox, sometimes, but inaccurately, termed the Polish ox, is so well known from better descriptions, that it is not necessary to say much of his qualities here. He is large in limb and horn, and has altogether a very different look from our own fine breeds. An English eye would condemn him as coarse, and not at all compact. The head in particular is different from that of any ox we ever saw, being very short from the horn downwards, and terminating in a broad muzzle, reminding one of that of the lion. The long limbs and flabby sides must take

much time to feed compared with our tidy race : yet it is said that on good pasture they fatten very soon, and bring great profit to the dealers. The flesh is juicy, and far superior to anything found in France or Germany. The colour of the animals, as formerly stated, is generally greyish-white : year-olds may be seen now and then with a blackish coat, but seldom ; and white is scarcely ever met with. The horns are of such extraordinary length, that one of these animals would be an awkward friend to meet in a London alley. Even in the mile-wide roads of Russia, the traveller at first feels far from comfortable on seeing a flock of them advancing, tossing their white horns in the sun, like the bayonets of a regiment on march. They are extremely gentle, however, and though not so hardy for draught as some other continental breeds, especially the shorter-necked and shorter-limbed Hungarian, yet they are of immense value to the Russians of the south, from their steadiness, and the ease with which they can be kept on journeys of many hundred miles. Indeed, it is chiefly for carrying-purposes that they are used, the cows being of little use in the dairy, from the difficulty of milking them. In general look they come nearest to the classic white steers of Italy—one of the finest sights of that country rich in sights ; but the horns are neither so long nor so finely shaped as those of the oxen of the Apennines.

After getting through the first of these vast herds, the evening became so beautiful, that, with the aid of the moonlight, we drove along most delightfully. In every hamlet nothing but singing was to be heard from the young women walking arm-in-arm on the little footpaths.

At *Lubotin*, twelve miles from Koursk, they were lirting away long after dusk, till the very air seemed to be filled with the monotonous chorus. The cricket, too, was chirruping in the thatch ; and just as we were musing in the porch on all these pleasant themes, and especially on the cheerful contrast which this part of the emperor's dominions affords to that which we had left, up came a mule, the first of his tribe seen in Russia to tell us that we were in quite a new region, where the people are as different from the Russian in origin and manners as the droschky-horse of the Neva is from his reverence the mule of the Ukraine. Had he been able to say more, our long-eared philosopher would have added that there is no use for mules, and as little for donkies, in a country where horses are so cheap and abundant as they are in the centre and north of Russia.

Most of our party were fast asleep as we passed through a cottage-looking place, of very strange appearance, and so lost a very singular scene. The straggling light of the moon, just about to sink, falling upon it, produced such a picture of dreary repose as has seldom been surpassed : the place seemed the Wyoming of Russia—a spot where gentle beings might dwell, and never dream of a world without. The small thatched cottages, clean and comfortable, with tapering roofs descending almost to the ground, standing in the middle of large fresh gardens, well stocked with shrubs and fruit-trees, looked exactly like large bee-hives,—of which plenty of small ones were to be seen among the shrubs. We almost began to think that the bees would mistake the fair moon for the sun, and begin their morning hum ; but we had not listened

long ere another kind of song saluted us : for just as we reached the last straggling lanes of the place, a troop of peasant girls were heard returning from some wake, singing, though it was now near midnight, as merrily as if it had been noonday.

The people of the post-house at *Valky*, a district town of the government of Kharkoff, wondered greatly to see folks taking their dinner at one o'clock in the morning ; but a few roubles sent them back pleased to their sleep, and we jogged on through this strangest of countries. We could see that it was very populous : there were villages at the end of every mile, and many lay far back on either hand. But there was a kind of population soon began to make themselves heard, that we had not reckoned on—not the bees nor the singing maidens—but the poultry : cocks, hens, and chickens—geese, turkeys, every winged creature that man ever tamed—long before dawn filled the air with such a crowing, droning murmur, as at first we could in nowise comprehend. It seemed as if the whole region had been one large hen-roost. The houses and trees rang with their din. At last, when day dawned, between three and four, we began to understand it a little.

The villages were scattered around us by hundreds. The country is not picturesque ; for scarcely any wood grows in it. Near the road it is very flat, but farther back on the west is an irregular ridge, by the foot of which a stream is seen. The whole space commanded by the eye is dotted with houses—some in hamlets, some solitary, but all surrounded by such careful, ingenious cultivation as is seldom to be seen in any country. Many

of the farm-steads stand by themselves, which is rarely seen in the higher parts of Russia; and in general they have a very comfortable look. Each farm has its wind-mill, and the hamlets are guarded by whole squadrons of them; water-mills are also frequent. Had anything been wanting to convince us of the industrious habits of the people, it would have been furnished by the early hours which, as we soon saw, they are in the habit of observing. Obedient to the call of chanticleer, they were moving before it was light; and when day had fully appeared, not one was to be seen idle. Some were driving cattle to the pasture, some searching for pigs that had wandered overnight, and some, finally, were marshalling the feathered stock, which had puzzled us so much. Countless, therefore, were the flocks of poultry which were now crossing the road at every instant. They seemed to have an especial eye on the buck-wheat, which was still uncut. Ludicrous was the dignity with which the self-important bipeds strutted away among the larger cattle, and great was the contempt with which they appeared to regard the society of the ignoble sheep. The oxen here are very beautiful, and the sheep are nearly all black.

So many stories have been given to the world concerning the Ukraine, and especially of its fertility, that some readers may be surprised to find that we have nothing more marvellous to relate concerning it. In self-defence, however, we must fairly confess that we saw nothing more wonderful than what has been above described. We have not one fact to offer in confirmation of those narratives which state, that, in the Ukraine, cattle are so

abundant, and of such small value, that in order to get at the tallow, the people do not take the trouble of eating the flesh of the animal, but after stripping it of the skin, put the whole carcase into a machine for squeezing out the fat, which they collect in the skin, and then throw away what remains in the machine for manure! or rather, they throw it into the river, there being no use for manure in a country where—as is further narrated—the soil is so rich, that the numerous herds cannot consume one-fiftieth part of the clover; so that farmers must set fire to the fields in order to get rid of the surplus! When they have taken a crop in one spot, away the horde moves to some other district, which, having never been torn by the plough, is enriched by the rotten grass of centuries.

Such are some of the fables still printed regarding the Ukraine; and they by no means equal in exaggeration the statements which circulate daily, in works intended for the people, of the barbarity, the rude dresses and habitations seen in this and other parts of Russia. These stories would be excellent did they possess one particle of truth; but of them, and of much more that is stated regarding Russia, it is enough to say, that he who comes to the country will find scarcely a single trace of all the wonders he has been perusing since his youth. Time alone, and the more frequent visits of travellers, can remove these misrepresentations; and all who publish an account of what they have here beheld, however humbly the task may be executed, deserve well of those who wish to see ignorance and prejudice corrected. Even after the exaggeration of popular tales has been

rejected, there will be found among the Russians much that is most singular and new. Though not "barbarians"—at least not in the sense in which the term is often applied to them in England—they are still, by their usages, their institutions, their circumstances, so completely distinct from all the other nations of Europe, that he who makes human manners his study is well rewarded for the trouble of coming amongst them. On one point all who have been in Russia will agree, viz., that they have found it totally different from what they had previously imagined it to be—in density of population, in the general character of its scenery, in fertility, in resources—in every point, except the most important of all, civilization; and yet they have a kind of it too.

The fertility of the Ukraine is such, that no exaggeration is necessary regarding it: the references which so frequently occur in the foregoing pages to the numerous beeves which were constantly passing us are sufficient evidence of the richness of the soil. In fact, so fertile is the whole of Little Russia, both in pasture and corn land, that, besides exporting such vast herds and enormous quantities of wheat, it is also able to feed nearly the whole of the cavalry of the empire. With the exception of the cavalry of the guard stationed at St. Petersburg, and the long-necked pets of some Cossack policemen, scarcely a single mounted soldier is seen by the traveller until he reach the southern districts. There are 45,000 cavalry in Little Russia alone.

There is some truth in the statement often made, that the farmers in this fertile province never employ manure

on their lands. It is not quite correct, however, to assert that they throw it away ; for, on the contrary, they preserve it very carefully, fuel being so scarce in the treeless regions of the south, that the people are under the necessity of drying the dung of their cattle in the sun, in order to employ it in making their fires. If there be any truth in the notion, as old as the days of Theophrastus, that manure, in regions where little rain falls, *burns* instead of invigorating the earth, the dry soils of southern Russia yield more abundant crops without the kind of aid now referred to.

Returning from this digression about the marvels of the Ukraine, we must now direct the reader's attention to those singular green knolls, best known by the native name of *kourgans*, which so strongly excite the curiosity of all who visit this interesting region. The first of them began to appear soon after we entered the government of Pultava ; but similar objects also occur throughout the whole country for at least three hundred miles to the south of that point, and with a frequency truly remarkable. These mounds are from twenty to thirty feet high, and generally of a conical form. They are usually placed in irregular groups of three or four, which have the appearance of so many encampments of miniature hills, raised to break the monotony of a country which by nature is so extremely flat.

The feelings of curiosity excited among us by the first view of these singular objects were always renewed by each fresh cluster. Many and contradictory were our first conjectures regarding them. Are they ancient fortifications ? Irish barrows ? Scotch cairns ? or Greek

tombs? were a few of the questions which they suggested when they first appeared, and which were still far from being satisfactorily answered when we saw the last of them. Our difficulties concerning them are by no means diminished by the fact, that similar monuments are to be met with in so many countries which, whatever bond of union may have once existed between them, have for many centuries had no tie in common. Mounds precisely similar to those which we saw in these Scythian wilds are to be met with in the most classic spots. Those tumuli, for instance, which stand near the site of Troy, and round which Alexander and his heroes did honour to the memory of Achilles and his beloved Patroclus, are exactly similar to the kourgans of Russia. Passing to a very different and distant region, we find them also in Sweden; for the little mounts at Old Upsala are in shape and size exactly the same as those which we saw on the plains of Troy. Similar monuments, it is well known, are found in England also; as on the downs of Wiltshire. Even on the remote Mainland of Orkney corresponding structures are to be seen; for the "barrows," or mounds, which stand near the celebrated Standing Stones of Stennis are exact copies both of those of Asia Minor and of the Ukraine.

What, then, shall we say of these *kourgans*? Are they the monuments of a time when a similar religion and similar usages prevailed over the whole of the different regions where they still exist—the only, but also the imperishable, records of a history which it is now vain to attempt to explore? In fact, after all the labour which the learned have bestowed in clearing up the

history of these monuments, their origin and objects still remain very obscure. The most probable theory regarding these wonders of the Ukraine is, that they are the burial-places of some great and numerous race, which once flourished in these rich regions, but have left no other trace of their grandeur. Some authors think that the people who raised them must have been of Mongolian descent. This opinion is founded on the rude stone images by which the mounds are often surmounted, and of which the features, as well as the shape of the head attire, resemble those of the people now named,—a theory which we can neither contradict nor confirm, as neither stone nor image of any kind was to be seen near any of the many hundreds which we passed. We were assured, however, that on digging into some which have been opened, coins of gold and silver have been found, with gold rings, buckles, and other ornaments of value,—discoveries which lead us to what, probably, is the only true account that history contains of the origin of these monuments. For, referring to Herodotus, it will be found that, while treating of the very regions which we were now travelling through, he gives what, without exaggeration, can be pronounced a most minute account of these *kourgans*. His words are so remarkable, that they deserve to be quoted without mutilation: “The sepulchres of the kings of the Scythians,” says he, “are in the country of the Gerrhi. As soon as the king dies, a large trench, of a quadrangular form, is sunk, near where the Borysthenes begins to be navigable. When this has been done, the body is enclosed in wax, after it has been

thoroughly cleansed, and the entrails taken out: before it is sown up, they fill it with anise, parsley-seed, bruised cypress, and various aromatics. They then place it on a carriage, and remove it to another district, where the persons who receive it, like the royal Scythians, cut off a part of their ear, shave their heads in a circular form, take a round piece of flesh from their arm, wound their foreheads and noses, and pierce their left hands with arrows. The body is again carried to another province of the deceased king's realms, the inhabitants of the former district accompanying the procession. After thus transporting the dead body through the different provinces of the kingdom, they come at last to the Gerrhi, who live in the remotest parts of Scythia, and amongst whom the sepulchres are. Here the corpse is placed upon a couch, round which, at different distances, daggers are fixed: upon the whole are disposed pieces of wood covered with branches of willow. In some other part of this trench they bury one of the deceased's concubines, whom they previously strangle, together with the baker, the cook, the groom, his most confidential servant, his horses, the choicest of his effects, and, finally, some golden goblets, for they possess neither silver nor brass: to conclude all, they fill up the trench with earth, *and seem to be emulous in their endeavours to raise as high a mound as possible.* The ceremony does not terminate here. They select such of the deceased king's attendants, in the following year, as have been most about his person: these are all native Scythians, for in Scythia there are no purchaseable slaves, the king se-

lecting such to attend him as he thinks proper : fifty of these they strangle, with an equal number of his best horses."*

In a note to this passage, Major Rennell says, " It has not come to our knowledge that any of these monuments have been found in the Ukraine, where the sepulchres described by Herodotus should have been : " but from what has been stated above, it will have been seen that this objection is completely without foundation, for these kourgans occur *precisely on the spot referred to by the historian*, and that required by his able commentator. It may also be added, that, in addition to the objects above enumerated, some of the kourgans which have been opened were found to contain human bones, skeletons of horses, ancient weapons, and domestic utensils. The human bones often occur in such large quantities, as could have been produced in no other way than by such barbarous hecatombs as those described by the historian.

* *Beloe's* HERODOTUS, book iv. ch. 71.

CHAPTER XXII.

BATTLE-FIELD OF PULTAVA.

Swamps of the Ukraine—PULTAVA—Search for lodgings—Fall a prey to Jews—Sketch of an old one—Visit to the field of battle—Appearance of the ground—Astonishment—Voltaire—Monument to the Swedes—Reflections on the fate of the prisoners, and of Charles XII.—Contrast with Napoleon—Account of the town—Fine streets and houses—Public walk—Grapes—Climate of central Europe becoming worse—French prisoners—Cheap living—Marketting—Beef—Wines—Melons—Price of horses—Draught oxen—Leech-gathering—Cossack revel—Dancing—Fare at our inn—Beds—Insects.

THE white towers of Pultava, ninety-two miles from Kharkoff, began to appear on their lofty point while we were yet twenty miles away from them; and the gay sight enabled us to fast, with tolerable patience, for a few hours more. Our self-denial, however, was probably aided on this occasion by the knowledge which we had, that here, in the midst of plenty, the post-houses are even more scantily stored than in less wealthy provinces; for the hospitable people of the Ukraine like better to give a man a dinner than to send him to the tavern to pay for one.

We had long remarked that the Russian roads are always worst near towns; and that leading to Pultava did not contradict the rule. For the last ten miles it runs through a tract of heavy sand, with wooded swamps

on either hand. What these swamps must have been *in winter*, the season in which Charles XII. was wandering through them, may easily be imagined when we see that even in summer they are almost impassable, especially when the small Vorskla, here joined by the smaller Poltavka, overflows its shallow bed. These streams meet close beside the city.

Pultava, which had made so gallant a show for many miles back, did not deceive us when we climbed its height. We were surprised to find, however, that in a place of 9300 inhabitants, with many wealthy nobles and traders amongst them, nothing in the shape of an inn is to be found. At the first house where we applied for lodgings, they would have nothing to say to us. On we drove, therefore, through market and lane, by church and tower, when at last we began to have hope on seeing that we were among Jews. Wherever there are Jews, nothing will be refused for which money can be offered.

Jews are to be distinguished in a moment from the Russians. Like the Jew, the Russian merchant wears a long swaddling robe: but the coat of the Russian is blue, and generally tied with a sash; that of the Jew is black, and for the most part buttoned to the chin, thereby concealing the filth below: it is as greasy and shining as a sheepskin. The Russian has a long beard, and so has the Jew; but the Russian's is reddish, the Jew's black as the raven's plume. If any doubt still remain about the lineage of the person before him, the traveller has but to look at the twinkling dark eye and cunning face. No Russian ever had these; for in

general his eye is light, and his face full of good-natured simplicity, without any tincture of cunning. Our comparisons, however, which we made while being trundled from house to house in the streets of Pultava, with our carriage surrounded by a constantly-increasing crowd of hungry-looking Jews, were at last put an end to, on our being admitted by an eating-house keeper, who agreed to give us the best beds which his house afforded—that is, hay and straw, as much as we pleased, for some of the party, and greasy mattresses for the rest.

We had scarcely alighted in the yard when we were assailed by the troop of Jews, who had hunted after us as staunchly as a pack of wolves. Amongst them were two brothers, who both wanted to be our guides to the field of battle, which they know is the principal object of interest to travellers. An old man next put himself in nomination for the job. Another, also old, wanted to exchange money for us, while we were all the time starving for want of food, not for lack of gold. There was like to be no end to their annoyance—they went on yelling at us with open throats, pressing upon us, and seizing us by the arms, with true Jewish pertinacity—till at last, as the only way of getting rid of them, we managed to set them a fighting with each other, and we escaped in the storm. But a Jew, especially an old one, is not so easily baffled as we had imagined. Neither harsh words nor entreaty (and as he spoke German we were able to give him a little of both) could drive the oldest one away. He pursued us to the public room, and then to our bed-rooms, urgently begging of us to think again: we must be needing *something* from him:

if we did not want money, he could supply us with smuggled goods, with silk handkerchiefs, with wine, with anything—only let him make a little by us in some way or other—a little, and he would be satisfied. It would have been a violation of his dearest principles to have let us enter the town without having made some gain by us. When at last we showed him Russian notes, to convince him that we had sufficient funds without applying to him, his lip quivered with emotion: the very sight of money makes the eye of a Jew glisten with excitement. We had only made the matter worse. He became more obstreperous than ever in his offers of service. There was no help for us but to turn him out by force. Yet he still lingered, prowling for our exit, not to revenge himself on us, but to renew his supplications, and be again insulted.

We have described this person and his conduct, because he is a specimen of a tribe which swarms in all the towns of the south of Russia. Those who have crossed from Breslau, by Cracow, down to Brody, will also recognize an acquaintance—for in the towns on that line the traveller is pestered beyond belief by these remarkable men. Nothing can be more painful than to witness the meanness of their importunity. It makes one blush for humanity.

Singular, unhappy race! What reflecting man can come in contact with them, either here, or in those other parts of the continent, and of the east, where they are beheld in all their debasement, without being *constrained* to believe in that faith which these men confirm by rejecting it. The degradation of the Jews is no ordinary

degradation—such is the impression which we have always felt, while exposed to a scene like that which we have mentioned—it is too strongly marked to have been produced by common causes. It is not the mere demoralization under which the descendants of other great nations of antiquity also pine ; but it is a punishment—the visible chastisement of that terrible wrath which is still hot against them—the indelible stamp pointing them out to all men, and to all times, as living monuments of the truth of Him who “ came to his own, yet his own received him not.”

The great object of interest to all who visit Pultava is the famed field of battle where Charles XII., after years of glory, at last was humbled by his rival Peter the Great.

There has been, probably, but one battle fought within the last 150 years whose consequences can compare in importance with those of the battle now named ; for, from the moment that Charles fled from the Ukraine—wounded, deserted, loaded with every misfortune but dishonour—Sweden, which since the great Adolph's time had played such a mighty part in the affairs of Europe, began to dwindle into the obscurity of a second-rate power, and Russia got rid of the only rival that could have effectually barred her way to the attainment of the high position which she now holds. Nor have the full consequences of that victory yet been seen. The future history of Europe, the encroachments which Russia is still to make on her civilized neighbours, will alone show the full extent of the evil arising from her triumph on

the spot which, from these considerations, we are now about to visit with feelings of no common interest.

Our drive to the ground was accomplished in true Russian style—in droschkies, namely, and accompanied by one of the younger Jews—"page unmeet," we allow, for a field where such chivalrous deeds were done; but he was poor and in sorrow—had lost his parents and had few friends—claims which made us prefer him to more clamorous candidates.

The scene of action, now covered with rich corn-fields, lies to the south-west of the town, on a plain about four miles from the principal gate. In going to it, we first followed the road to Kieff, but soon struck off to the right, by a path leading through fields where nothing was left by the reaper but some patches of buckwheat. A little hill, if we may apply the term to an artificial height, rising not much above thirty feet from the ground, with a large white cross on its summit, which had for some time attracted our attention, proved to be the mound which marks the burial-trenches of the enemy. On ascending the naked sides of this funeral mount—for even the green sod has never flourished on its mould—we found an inscription in Russian, painted on the transverse part of the cross, stating, without any pompous exaggeration, in less than a dozen of words, "Here are interred the Swedes who fell in the great day of Pultava."

At this point, then, we are in the centre of the battle. The white towers of Pultava, and of the convent near it are seen; but except these, not a single object, house or hill, is within sight, to break the dead level spreading on

every side. Some woods, indeed, are seen, and there is a deep ravine, partly between us and the town, opening in the bed of the Vorskla, which skirts the battlefield on the west; but neither ravine nor river-bed is much seen from where we stand. In fact, on witnessing the extreme uniformity of the surrounding country, it struck us all that the ground was ill-suited for the small army of the royal Swede to make a decisive stand upon. The military chief of our party, in particular, whose experience gave him a right to speak on the subject, was surprised at the nature of the scene. In the 127 years which had elapsed since this famed engagement took place, the *surface* of the ground may have been considerably altered; but that it can have been *materially* changed in any of its great features is impossible. The mound which the Russians have piled over the slain is not—like the mountain which the illustrious Belgians have so modestly and so deservedly raised to their own bravery, on the field of Waterloo—of such dimensions as to deface the adjoining ground, and render it impossible to understand the accounts of the action. Here no vain-glorious feeling has been at work; and the spade and the plough, in their ordinary rounds of industry, leave the general aspect of a country unchanged from century to century. There may, however, be less wood or fewer swamps than in other days; but still, allowing for all such changes, the spot appears a very singular one to have been chosen by such a master in the art of war, as the place for making a final and desperate effort. Whatever it may have formerly been, *now* it does not present a single advantage for an already weakened combatant: it is a

dead, unvaried flat, with the ravine at too great a distance to have been of the slightest use, either for defence or retreat.

Altogether the field looks more like a place where friendly kings would marshal their armies, to witness a festive tournament, than one where they would join in deadly combat. The woods, however, of which, as we have said, there were probably more in other days, may have yielded some shelter to the Swedes. Looking towards the town, there is one of some extent on the right, near the high road, with a smaller one at our back: a line may have extended between these. There is another wood advancing towards Pultava, on the left, above the ravine; but make even the best of these, and the ground still appears very unfavourable to Charles. If there be any truth, however, in the traditions of the place, which state that he had been driven from the monastery which occupies such a conspicuous height outside Pultava, it is probable that the fighting began on the winding ravine in front towards the town, and that he withdrew by degrees till he reached this extensive flat, favourable for the operation of his small band of cavalry.

Voltaire's account of the battle, which reads very well at school, is not intelligible on the spot. More recent authors, in describing it, say that the burial trenches are still visible; but we saw nothing of the kind.

Every reader is so familiar with all the particulars of the battle, that it is unnecessary to recall them. The Russians, besides having the strong town of Pultava at their back, were three times more numerous than the

Swedes, who, including 12,000 Cossacks, were never more than 30,000 strong. Of the Swedish force, 24,000 entered the field, including 8000 Cossacks. Besides 9000 of all descriptions slain, 6000 were made prisoners, of whom at least 1000 were Swedes. The remnant of the army made good their retreat to the Dnieper, at the mouth of the Vorskla, but were compelled to surrender three days after the battle. Leave was granted to the Swedes to inter their slain, on the spot where we mused upon all that had passed; and it is highly to the honour of the Russians that to this hour they show every respect to the memory of their brave foes. A religious service is performed every year on the little mount, when great processions come out, with priests and funeral hymns, from the city; and when the emperor was last here, he gave orders that a church should be raised on the field, where mass will be duly said for the repose of the fallen Swedes.

The hazel and wild hawthorn of the adjoining copse, both laden with their autumnal burthen, yielded us a wreath to the memory of Charles and his brave companions. The interest which we felt on the occasion compelled us to ask how it happens that military glory blinds us to so many faults. Charles, we knew, was but a reckless, unmerciful soldier, who never formed a single scheme for promoting the welfare of his own subjects, nor cherished a single wish for advancing the happiness of the human race; and yet we now gave him the tribute of our sympathy, as warmly as if he had been the benefactor of mankind, and meditated here, amid the dull plains of Russia, on the scene of his saddest humiliation,

as reverentially as we had done some months before, while standing on the scene of his death, amid the wild rocks of Norway.

On inquiring whether any descendants of the Swedes who were made prisoners in the battle were now to be found in this part of Russia, we were reminded that all who were captured in the Swedish wars, especially officers, were turned to excellent account by the sagacious Peter; for, as most of them were men of good attainments, he sent them to his distant towns, where they made a comfortable subsistence as teachers and superintendents of public institutions. Tobolsk, though we cannot think of it but as a city of barbarism and misery, is said, owing to the circumstance of many Swedes having been sent there at such an early period, to be in many respects far before the towns of European Russia. According to the unhappy fashion of the times, some of the captive Swedes appear to have been sold as slaves to the Turks, who were at the time on good terms with Sweden! The Cossacks were all broken on the wheel.

The fate of Charles himself in this battle has been made the frequent theme both of the historian and the poet. Too brave to flee from the danger into which he had brought them, he did not leave his gallant army till the very last necessity. When violently carried from the field, none accompanied him but Poniatowsky, a brave Pole, Colonel Gieta, and Mazeppa, the renowned chief of the Cossacks, who remained faithful to Charles, and soon after died by his side, in his seventieth year. The fugitive king found his way to the banks of the Dnieper, there bade adieu to the shattered remains of his army,

and at last arrived in safety on the Turkish side of the Bog at Oczakow, where he was safe from pursuit.

It is singular enough to consider, that something more than a century after this battle was fought, another great soldier, who had also been conqueror in a hundred fields, was, like Charles, to meet his first and his most ominous reverse on the distant plains of Russia. Like that of Charles, too, the whole of Napoleon's remaining career, after his Russian disasters, was but a continued series of humiliations. One great difference, however, between the two restless warriors cannot fail to strike us: Charles struggled on with his men to the very last; Napoleon deserted his as soon as their dangers became serious. In fact, there is nothing in history more touching than the picture of perseverance and magnanimity which the royal Swede presents, in the winter preceding the battle of Pultava, while struggling through the morasses and horrors of the Ukraine, in the midst of snow and ice,—without shelter, without rest, without food,—yet never once dreaming of abandoning his army to their fate. If at last he does forsake them, it is only when hope itself had vanished. Even then it was not to his own country that he fled, but to that of an ally, some thousand miles away: but Napoleon left many thousands of his brave men to perish amid the snows of Russia, while he himself was warm and gay in his well-secured capital.

From being situated in such a commanding position, Pultava must in former days have been a place of great strength; now it is merely a showy town, with abundance of green domes and crowding pinnacles, scattered along

the extensive height. An ill-kept rampart still surrounds the most exposed parts; but, finding only six hundred soldiers here, we inferred that little importance is attached to it in a military point of view. It covers a great deal of ground, but the streets, though as straight and as long as all other streets in Russia, are not so decaying and dull in their look as those of many other towns. The larger and more ancient of the houses are of wood, but there are many handsome structures of recent date built of stone; among which are the imperial institution for the education of young ladies, some of whom are free boarders, while others pay eight hundred roubles (twenty pounds) a-year. A fine building for the corps des cadets is now in progress. Near it is a vast market-place, which must be more than half a mile long, with a square bazaar in the centre, and small shops in the piazzas which run round the whole space. On the side of the town lying nearest the field of battle is a very handsome square, round which stand the mansions of the governor, the director of police, and other high officials, with a fine shady garden, London-fashion, in the centre,—the only thing of the kind seen in Russia. This garden is adorned with a fine monument to Peter the Great, consisting of a green bronze column, fifty feet high, surmounted by the Russian eagle, which eagerly raises its neck, and flutters its wings, as if impatient to fly toward the field of battle, on which its gaze is fixed. Some extremely handsome mansions, scattered through the town, are occupied by the nobility of the district, many of whom are very rich. One of the most distinguished is the young Count K——, well known in England, his

mother having been our countrywoman. The family are of Greek origin, and have large possessions in the Crimea.

A good many Germans, chiefly tradesmen, are mixed with the population of the town; and the Jews, as may be inferred from the scene already mentioned, are in great force.

We were surprised to find here one of the finest public walks on the continent. It is called the Imperial Garden, and forms the boundary of the town to the south-east, where it covers one of the slopes, and part of the bottom of a beautiful valley, closed in on every side by lofty ridges. There are some very fine trees, with walks through them, and well-kept seats, commanding the finest points of view. In this valley we first saw the vine in Russia. There were some rich clusters of fruit on the plants, but the people of the town who accompanied us in our walk assured us, that, from the frosts setting in so much earlier than formerly, grapes now never ripen here. They insist that the climate all over these provinces is rapidly changing for the worse. A person who has been eight-and-twenty years here says, that in former times August and September used to be insupportably hot; now people are forced to wear fur in those months, their climate having become fully as bad as that of St. Petersburg, though they lie ten degrees south of it! In fact, that a great and rapid change is taking place in the climate of central Europe cannot be doubted. We were lately told by a nobleman from Moravia, who has been several years away from his estates, that he now trembles to receive letters from home in the harvest season, each successive year

having brought him more disastrous accounts than the former, about the failure of the more essential crops. Orchards where the more delicate fruits used to ripen freely will now scarcely produce the commonest apple; grain of all kinds is of inferior quality; and potatoes, on which the people had begun to rely as their principal food, have for some seasons been a complete failure throughout the whole of that part of the Austrian dominions where his property is situated. Crossing from thence into Russia, we find the change equally great. Clarke speaks of the grape as flourishing in his time at Voronege, which is in $51^{\circ} 39\frac{1}{2}'$ north latitude, and now it does not ripen at Pultava in $49^{\circ} 35'$. The subject is worthy of more attention than has yet been paid to it.

Though so highly distinguished by its fidelity to Russia during the desperate struggles with Sweden in Peter's time, Pultava appears now to have cooled in its loyalty. We were amazed—for there are few places in Russia chargeable with the same crime—that the Pultavians rejoiced at the first successes of the French, and prepared to welcome them as deliverers. When Napoleon was in Moscow, pikes and arms were secretly prepared here for a general rising throughout the district; but the sudden reverses of the great soldier put an end to all their schemes of insurrection. When the French were defeated, however, as the people of Pultava had shown so much anxiety to have these foreigners amongst them, a good many of the prisoners were sent to them. Among these was a wealthy French general, who lightened his bondage by giving splendid balls to the townspeople and his brother officers, and is still well

swamps about which are yielding them great captures. Here a thousand leeches are sold for four roubles (3s. 4d.) ; at Hamburg, before reaching which one-half die, the same number is sold for 120 roubles (near £5) ; and in England the country apothecary pays £9 and £12. 10s. for the quantity which originally only cost 3s. 4d. But of every thousand at least seven hundred die before reaching England.

In wandering through the deep ravines outside the town, we came on a merry scene of peasants and soldiers, enjoying their holiday. This part of the vicinage is really romantic ;—straw-thatched cottages, neat and clean, are scattered among well-stocked orchards and large trees, with pieces of water and broken dells all round. Among these, crowds of little black Cossack soldiers were seated in groups on the turf, drinking their vodki in loving harmony, with pears, apples, and cucumbers passing freely from hand to hand. They were greatly pleased when we partook of their proffered cheer, but particularly when the crazy strains of a violin tempted us to enter a low hut, where their wives were waiting to be invited to the dance. And there they footed it right merrily, Cossack and Cossack's bride, on the hard clay floor. Their dance is a kind of reel, very decent and inoffensive—much more so than the waltzing of French or German peasants. One dance was performed solely by females, three together : two advance hand-in-hand towards their companion, who moves a little to meet them ; after some becks and bows, the parties, handkerchief in hand, dance away from each other, and then

commence some mazy evolutions, executed with great solemnity of face, the handkerchiefs being always waved round the head at certain turns of the air.

We concluded the toils and amusements of the day with a Cossack feast at our quarters. Though cooked by a German, the dishes were all in the style of the country. The beef was as juicy, and nearly as raw, as if it had been broiled in the tent of the wanderers themselves. We must protest, however, against the fowls of the Ukraine. It may be very well to hear them, for once, rousing people out of their beds in the morning, but we have no wish ever to see them again on the table. The tenderest of them was as tough as a piece of Cossack horse could have been. With this exception, the fare of Pultava was admirable, and certainly the cheapest that we ever partook of in any country.

We had so many things to see, or subjects to discuss, that it was late before we repaired to the beds before mentioned ; and when we did so we were too painfully convinced that sleep is generally a stranger to the couch of the traveller in the Ukraine. Those of us who deemed ourselves happy in having secured mattresses from mine host, found them populous with bugs. Nor were those of us who had been satisfied with the humbler accommodations of a bundle of hay on the floor altogether safe from these formidable rivals of their neighbours, the leeches. In justice to Russia, however, we must state that the traveller's rest in it is not nearly so much disturbed by these monsters as in France or Germany.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LOWER UKRAINE, AND NOTES ON THE VARIOUS COSSACK TRIBES.

Cottages—Farms—Dung and reeds for fuel—Crops—Account of the buck-wheat—Russian and Scottish sheep-farmers—Want of canals and rail-roads—Devastations of the locust—Wretched state of education—Village inn—Cossack trowsers—Nut-brown maids—Large farms—Stack-yards—Mode of farming—Cossack farm-house—Bees—Omelink—Birds—KREMENTCHOUK—Trade—Jews—Delays—Plots of a postmaster—Notices of the Don Cossacks—Their country—Form of government—Privileges—The Cossack soldier—Beranger's Ode—Sir Walter Scott's beautiful picture of the Cossacks—Cossack regiments in the Emperor's service—General origin of these tribes—Karamain's account of them.

It was in leaving Pultava that the first symptoms of autumn greeted us; the sere and yellow leaf now displayed its monitory warning on every tree. The morning was sunny, but sharp, as an autumnal morning should be. The horses and roads were so good that we regularly accomplished ten English miles an hour.

As we advanced, wood became scarcer at every verst. The cottages amongst which we were travelling are made of wattles, covered with clay. Large heaps of small cakes of dried cow-dung are raised by the doors for fuel, and in the pools are dense crops of gigantic reeds, used also as fuel, when withered. Lines of waggons meet us so often that the wide way is literally encumbered by them. Detached farms of great extent, with good houses in the

centre, now become very frequent, and villages more scarce.

Within the whole horizon, as we travel on, nothing is seen but cultivation and industry. One of the principal crops is *buck-wheat*; and as this plant is of great importance in Russian agriculture, we may now state some particulars regarding it. It has a strong branching stem, from one to two feet high; the leaves are like those of the ivy, but tender and juicy, and growing alternately on the stalks. From the time of its first coming into bloom, which is very soon after it rises above the ground, until gathered for the barn, a new set of flowers is always appearing before the last fades; so that in every month of summer and autumn a field of this plant presents a fine show of reddish flowers. From being a native of a warm climate, it seldom thrives in a northern latitude. It can never be cultivated where the nights of May are frosty. Even in this southerly district it is liable to be injured by frosts. It is customary to let it stand on the ground just as long as there is no danger from autumn frosts; but we see plenty of it taken from the field with unwithered flowers, it being unusual to wait for the ripening of more than the earlier seeds. So far as we have seen, it would appear to be more frequently pulled up by the roots than cut with the sickle. It does not thrive so well in rich land as in a common soil, where there is a considerable mixture of sand. In the north of France, where a good deal of it is cultivated (under the name of *bled Sarrasin*, because it is supposed to have been brought into Spain by the Saracens), manure is seldom put on the soil for it, the plant being apt to run to straw when fed too much.

It succeeds well in some parts of England, where it is now spreading, more as an attraction for pheasants, who feed on it voraciously, than as a substitute for other crops. The Russians, who give it to their poultry, say that there is nothing all kinds of birds are so fond of. The straw cut young, when given to cows in moderation, is said to be very good for increasing the quantity of milk. The grain, which resembles the seeds of the beech-tree (hence its English name, which is taken from that of the Germans, who call it *buch-waizen*, *beech-wheat*), is given to horses in the Ukraine, in place of corn; roughly ground, the farmers also give it to their pigs and oxen, which fatten rapidly on it. It is singular enough, however, that though pigs can eat it with safety when given in the state now mentioned, they are soon seized with delirium when allowed to range the buck-wheat stubble.

In England, this grain is much used by the gin-distillers, who import large quantities of it every year from Holland. Any hurtful quality which the grain may originally possess is completely destroyed by the process of baking. The flour is very white, but does not ferment so well as to make good bread, though excellent cakes and pastry are made of it, both in France and Flanders. The great use of it in Russia is for making the pudding spoken of in our first volume, as being such a favourite with all classes. The supplies from the north come chiefly from the country we are now in. The most northerly point where we noticed the buck-wheat was near Vladimir ($56^{\circ} 7\frac{1}{2}'$), the climate of which is not so good as that of the central districts of Scotland. It is thought to be a great relief to a soil which has been long cropped with

wheat or barley. There are seldom more than six returns from it. French writers speak of a species which yields more than a hundred returns; but we heard of nothing of the kind in Russia.

Buck-wheat, however, is not the only crop of this region; for great quantities of beautiful wheat are also raised in it; nearly all of which, from the extensive use which they make of buck-wheat in their own families, the farmers of the Ukraine are able to send to foreign markets. Nor must we forget to add that, in order to procure a good price, some of them are in the habit of keeping their wheat ten years on hand before sending it to Odessa. For this purpose it is stored up in *silos*. A smooth kind of wheat called *ghirka* is in great favour in the district, chiefly, we believe, from its capability of being preserved a long time without being damaged.

Oats, barley, and Indian corn are also raised; as well as the sunflower, which is here cultivated principally for the sake of its oil. Hops, hemp, flax, tobacco, beans, pulse, pease, and carrots are also grown. In short, except the vine, almost everything that grows in any part of Europe, from its most temperate to its warmest regions, is raised in this favoured province.

The farmers here are also very attentive to their flocks; many of them have large numbers of sheep, all black, of which we meet some at every moment straggling on the road. In the government of Ekaterinoslaf, which borders with that of Pultava, there are said to be, among the ten thousand German colonists, some who possess flocks more numerous than those of the wealthiest sheep-farmers in Scotland. These Russian patriarchs sometimes possess

as many as seventeen thousand head of the finest sheep, while we do not know of any Scotch farmer possessing more than twelve thousand sheep, even in the county of Sutherland, which contains some of the richest wool-growers in the kingdom.

When we have added that honey is also obtained in great abundance throughout this district, many of the farmers keeping at least a hundred hives of bees, we may be allowed to ask what region surpasses the Ukraine in richness and fertility? In fact, both in regard to soil and climate, it is one of the most favoured regions of Europe. There is one drawback to its advantages, however; but from this it suffers in common with the whole tract from Moscow to Odessa—the want, namely, of water communication. Would the emperor, in place of eating them up with cavalry regiments, help the people to form a good canal, he would be doing more for them than by all the conquests he can make. The country is also admirably adapted for railroads.

Yet, rich and favoured as this fine district is, it is liable to be visited by one of the worst scourges that can afflict any country—the *locust*, which comes in such myriads, that herb and tree are laid bare in its devastating flight. It is also melancholy to reflect, in passing through this province, that, while so richly favoured with physical advantages, and all that is required for the support of life, it is still but a *moral* desert. Of knowledge or information of any kind on any subject, beyond the routine of their daily labours, the people possess little more than the beasts which plough their fields. Nor can we wonder at their ignorance, when we find that

throughout the whole government of Pultava, in which this district is included, there is only one scholar attending a schoolmaster out of every 662 of the inhabitants.

Passing *Kouremykovsky Khutor*, we rested to breakfast at *Reschetylowka*, a long village, larger than some district towns. We had of late been observing many indications of comfort among the peasantry, far beyond anything witnessed in the north; and in the post-house of this place we found a wonderful confirmation of the improved habits and circumstances in the population of this part of Russia. The room we sat in was furnished with something like rustic comfort; it actually contained a *bed*, seductively white and soft, with large pillows—the first decent sleeping-place we had yet seen at a Russian inn. The floor was covered with strong canvas by way of carpet, the cupboard filled with drinking-glasses, and the walls hung with pictures. The post-mistress, a comely Jewess, did the honours with great courtesy.

Everybody must recollect the Cossack trowsers which were in fashion a good many years ago. We had begun to think that, like other things attributed to the Cossacks, they might be unknown in the country itself; but, on reaching this place, we saw that they are really part of the national dress. The peasants below Pultava wear them with plaits round the waist, as preposterous as those of the caricatured dandies of other days.

The climate here became so warm, that we were glad to throw aside the cloaks and burdens of the north. The brown tinge on the cheek of the countrywomen, also, speaks of a nearer approach to the sun. Their charms

are not of the highest kind, and they dress so like men, that we often drove through a band of them before discovering their sex. The men generally wear a round black cap, a short loose great coat, and white trousers thrust into boots; and this is very nearly the dress of the bronzed maidens whom we meet driving along in carts; only that in place of boots they sport bare legs, while the kirtle supplies the place of the wide trowsers. The coquettes amongst them have their hair tied in a knot behind, with a showy yellow ribbon.

The carts for taking corn from the field are of immense length; and the grain is built in stacks as large as a good-sized house of two stories. Near every farmhouse crowds of labourers are seen gaily at work, making all secure before winter. Large flocks of turkeys and geese may now be seen wandering over the downs. To the north of Kursk the former are never met with, and the latter not often; which fully explains why the people here have soft beds, and those in the north leather mattresses stuffed with rags. Ducks seem to be in little favour in Russia. The pigs here become very compact, handsome fellows. There is a different race of them in every district: that of Kursk is the largest; but most of them are too heavy in the head and neck to feed well.

On inquiring about the mode of farming here, we found it a very simple affair: it may be explained in two words;—they take as many crops out of the ground as it will give, and then let it lie fallow a year or two.

The houses of the farmers are now much larger, and have a great look of comfort and thrift about them.

Many houses are placed close to the highway, to which the back, neatly plastered, and containing six or eight small windows, is generally turned. Each house is surrounded by a neat garden, in which the bee-hives are stationed. On the whole, however, we did not see many hives until we reached the hamlet of *Omelink*. We found plenty of them on strolling into the wood there, and great abundance of splendid flowers to make the honey from—chiefly mallows and geraniums—among thickets of overgrown sloes and wild pear-trees.

After this the road is often very sandy, and few houses are seen near it; but all the slopes at some distance from it are clothed with hamlets. The number of tiny wind-mills is greater than ever: there they are, fighting away with their six little arms at a great rate. Running water is scarcely ever to be seen. Our road in general is perfectly level, but the adjoining country undulates occasionally. The churches have now become plain grey structures, without paint or gilding. The willow is here a fine tree, with a huge trunk. It is almost the only tree. At one place, however, we found a wood of apple-trees, loaded with fruit as small and sour as the wilding-crab. Large flocks of lapwings may be seen by the roadside, apparently quite tame, as all winged creatures in Russia may be said to be; for nobody disturbs them. Clouds of unknown birds are sometimes seen high in the air, wheeling mysteriously over us as we journey on.

Evening brought us to KREMENTCHOUG, a district town of Pultava, from which it is seventy-seven miles distant. It is situated on the Kagamlik, close by its junction with the Dnieper, one of the largest rivers of

Russia. It contains eight thousand inhabitants, among whom some manufactures of cloth, sheeting, &c. are carried on with considerable success. Wool-washing is another branch of industry; and a considerable trade is transacted in tallow, a great deal of which is brought here to be melted.

Instead of entering by the regular path, we crossed a morass to reach the gate, but were interrupted by a soldier hastening from the guard-house to ask our *pass-ports*, which were again demanded at the opposite barrier, on leaving the town; but it is the only place in the interior in which the authorities ever addressed us on the subject.

We had to traverse the whole of this wide city, from side to side, before reaching the post-house. But though it took us a long time to get through its uncomely bounds, it may be described in very few words. It consists of nothing but vast squares and long sandy streets. The houses, some of which are of two stories, and some of only one, being chiefly constructed of timber and plaster-work, have all the patched and peeled characteristics of Russian houses in general. Though so dull in its look, however, the place could not be called desolate, for every corner was full of swarthy and eager Jews. Some of the churches and public institutions are adorned with fine porticoes, composed of immense stuccoed pillars, and have, on the whole, a handsome appearance. The bazaar, with its many ranges of low arcades, is large enough for a town of double the size.

On the whole, therefore, this is a very dreary place. The cheerless look of its vast squares, covered with deep

beds of sand in the middle, and with deep piles of bulky tallow-casks marshalled round the edge, is of itself sufficient to make one wish himself out of it as fast as possible ; and certainly, on finding how few were its attractions, we had no intention of honouring it long with our presence. Though evening was now falling, we determined to travel on all night ; but the want of horses delayed us a considerable time, during the whole of which the Jew postmaster seemed to be contriving some plot against our purses. Many eager looks were exchanged among a knot of the brethren in the large court-yard, and mysterious were their whisperings and gesticulations, while sundry emissaries were sent to correspond about us with confederates in distant parts of the town. Our suspicion that the landlord's intentions were not of the most honest description was confirmed when we discovered that, though he and his people had been tormenting us with Russian the whole time, yet he himself spoke very good German. All this puzzled us very much ; especially as the landlord, though his house was very good, and promised better accommodation than any we had seen for a long time, did not seem anxious that we should remain all night, and did not hold out even the promise of a good dinner to make us stay. A good bribe would probably have procured us horses, and put an end to these consultations in a moment.

Meantime, while we are detained at this the last town of the only tribe of the Cossacks which we had any opportunity of visiting, let us hold some gossip regarding the other branches of that interesting race.

Beginning with the Cossacks of the Don, the most

powerful of all the tribes that bear this warlike name, we find that they are a perfectly distinct race from those among whom we have been travelling. The form of government which prevails amongst them is also quite different from that of all the other members of the great Russian family. They acknowledge the Emperor of Russia as their sovereign, but neither pay him taxes, nor receive his laws. They render him military service, but retain the old names and the old forms of their primitive institutions. Their country lies to the east of the Ukraine, with which it borders at one point, whence it spreads away along the government of Ekaterinoslaf, which forms the rest of its western boundary—the Nogai Steppes in the Taurida, and the sea of Azoff, forming its south-west—the government of Circassia its south-east—that of Astrakkan its eastern, and those of Voronesh and Saratoff its northern frontiers. The territory covers 3611 geographic square miles. Except along the banks of the Don and in the north, as well as towards the Caucasian range, which sends some shoots into it near Lake Bolskoi, their country is a complete flat. On the banks of the larger rivers many fertile tracts occur ; but a great part of the surface is covered with the steppe-land, on which little but pasture is seen. A large proportion of the people live by agriculture, in which, however, they are not very skilful. Some occupy themselves with gardens, some with the rearing of bees, some with the preparation of caviar, isinglass, glue, and the drying of fish for exportation. A very numerous portion occupy themselves with what has usually been considered the only industry of the province—the rearing of cattle. Horses thrive so

well in the wide steppes, that in no part of the world perhaps may so many be seen as there. Though strong and active, however, the true Cossack horse is not a handsome animal; he is small, very long necked, and narrow behind, altogether presenting a hungered look; but put him to his mettle, and few will be found more fleet or more hardy.

The population is not so numerous as their warlike fame would lead us to suppose. The returns for 1832 make it only 512,570, including gipsies, Nogai Tartars, Armenians, and Greeks, as well as 16,413 Kalmucks, who are worshippers of the Dalai-Lama, and lead a wandering life, living in rude skin-tents, with camels, cattle, sheep, and horses browsing around them, all of which they rear with great success. A considerable part of the Russian light cavalry is supplied by the Kalmucks.

The Cossacks of this tribe are in general of the Greek religion, and hold the Kalmucks in great horror. The dignity of hetman no longer exists as a local title amongst them, nor any other of the tribes. Catherine II. deposed Count Razoumoufsky, the last chief of the Ukraine; and the present emperor has transferred the title of hetman of the Don to his eldest son. "The population," says Schnitzler, "is divided into two cities, and 119 *stunitza*, or assemblages of houses and families, varying from 50 to 309 houses each, arranged in unpaved streets, and surrounded by a kind of rampart and ditch: the *khutors* or stables are outside. The country is governed in a manner entirely different from that of the Russian governments. At one time the Cossacks formed a demo-

cracy, with an elective chief, whose powers were very limited : but this democracy became by degrees an aristocracy ; the assemblies of the stanitza, long preponderant, lost their rights ; and the influence of the council-of-war at St. Petersburg increased. The emperor reserved to himself the nomination of the chief, whose authority from that time became more firm and more active. At present all power is vested in the chief called *voiskovoïataman* (this is the dignity which the heir-apparent now holds), and, in his absence, in the *nakazniï-ataman*, or vice-ataman. They are divided into *polks* or regiments, and *sotnes* or companies, which are again subdivided into sections of fifties and tens. Each polk has a standard-bearer, and an *iessaoul* or major.”*

The Cossacks of the Don are free from taxes of every kind (this exemption is not enjoyed by the Kalmucks) ; but in return, all, from the age of fifteen to fifty, are liable to serve the emperor ; each individual dressing, equipping, and arming himself, solely at his own expense. They keep 2500 cavalry in constant readiness for service ; but, in case of need, can easily equip twice that number ; and, if called upon, every man capable of bearing arms must serve. They have pay only when in active service, or on the Russian frontier ; but government supplies them with field-equipage. The principal weapon of the Cossack is the long and formidable lance. He carries also a sabre, a musket, and a pair of pistols ; nor must the *natraïka*, or hard whip, be forgotten, for it is used against his foe as well as his own steed. At home the Don Cossack dresses very showily,—in a blue jacket lined with silk,

* *La Russie, la Pologne, &c.*, pp. 490-491.

and edged with gold lace, silk vest and girdle, ample white trowsers, and a large cap of black wool, with a red bag floating behind. But the soldiers dress in a short Polish jacket, wide dark-blue trowsers, and a huge sheep-skin cap. The chin is always adorned with a long black beard, peaking out before ; the hair of the head is cut short. Their women have very agreeable features, and dress in open silk tunic, wide trowsers, and yellow boots.

Without entering on a minute consideration of the circumstances of the other Cossack tribes, it may be stated generally, that, besides minor divisions, there are in all four great tribes of Cossacks in the Russian dominions: those of the Ukraine, those of the Don, those of the Black Sea (who, from their vicinity to the Caucasus, are almost constantly in active service), and those of Siberia. All of these appear to have had the same origin, having spread from Little Russia, where the Cossacks arose on the downfall of the Tartar dominion. Their language is chiefly Little Russian, with a mixture of Polish and, some say, of Turkish words. "Cossack" seems to be a Tartar word, expressing "light-armed horsemen fighting for pay;" but it would be difficult to say from what race they originally sprung. In all probability they were a mixture of Little Russians, who formed the great bulk of the hordes, with Kalnuicks, gipsies, Tartars, fugitive Poles, and adventurers of all nations, who united to fight for independence, now against Turk, and now against Muscovite. For the sake of security, they fortified themselves in the island of Kovletzkoï, situated near the mouth of the Dnieper. This

place afterwards became famous as the *Setcha* of the Zaporoghes, the name by which they were long known ; it referred to their position in regard to the *paroghi*, or cataracts, of the river. It was not till 1577 that they were known by the name of Cossacks, when they began to be heard of in the Polish wars. They soon afterwards formed themselves into the military government of regiments, which still exists. In 1592 they placed themselves under the protection of the king of Poland, who gave them a hetmān, and employed them as a barrier against the Turks and Tartars, between whom and the Cossacks there had always been a most deadly hatred. In consequence of some arbitrary interference with their privileges on the part of Poland, they *sought the protection* of Russia in 1654, and yielded her the same services which they had done to their former allies. They remained faithful to their new protectors till 1708, when Charles XII. came to the Ukraine ; and even at that time the Zaporoghes of the *Setcha* kept to their allegiance. In consequence of Peter the Great's cruel conduct towards the offenders, the whole body now joined the Khans of the Crimea ; but a speedy return of their old disgust drove them back to the Empress Anna, who treated them kindly. New feuds arose, however, under Catherine, who caused their *Setcha* to be destroyed, reduced the regiments of the Ukraine to the form of ordinary troops, and banished the Zaporoghes to Taman, where they founded the tribes now known as the Cossacks of the Black sea. By degrees, however, the Cossacks who remained on the Don regained their possessions and privileges ; and now for a hundred years they

have been faithful and useful auxiliaries to their Russian protectors. The Cossacks of Siberia are sprung from a colony from the Don, which fled under Yermak, in 1549, when the Cossacks had been temporarily subdued by the Muscovites.

By the following extract from Karamsin's great work, it will be seen that his account of the origin of the Cossacks differs in some particulars from that now given. "The chronicles of the year 1444," he says, "make mention of the Cossacks of Rezan, those light troops so celebrated in our day. The Cossacks then were not confined exclusively to the Ukraine, where their name begins to be known in history about the year 1517. Everything conduces to make us believe that they were known in Russia even before the invasion of Bati, and that this name designates the Torchi and Besendeans inhabiting the banks of the Dnieper below Kief. It is there also that we discover the first settlement of the Cossacks of Little Russia. Like the Torchi and the Besendeans, the Cossacks called themselves Tcherkasses. In fact, various tribes, very different both in name and lineage, appear to have united, for the sake of living free and independent on the islands of the Dnieper, surrounded by rocks and impassable marshes. They drew after them a great number of Russians, flying from slavery, who were soon confounded with them under the name of Cossacks; who, as one people, became entirely Russian, with the greater facility that, since the tenth century, the ancestors of these same Cossacks, as inhabitants of the province of Kieff, were themselves Russians. Their number increased

from day to day, and, animated by the spirit of independence and brotherhood, they founded a Christian and military republic in the southern regions of the Dnieper, and began to build villages and fortresses in the districts desolated by the Tartars. They declared themselves the defenders of the Lithuanian provinces, against the inhabitants of the Crimea, and against the Turks, and succeeded in attracting the especial good-will of Sigismund the First, who granted them several privileges, as well as lands above the cataracts of the Dnieper, where they gave their name to the town of *Tcherkass*. They were divided into centuries and regiments. Their hetman, or chief, received, as a mark of respect, from Stephen Bathory, king of Poland, a royal standard, a horse-tail, a club, and a seal.

“ For this people, born to war, and enthusiastic for liberty, was it reserved to deliver Little Russia from the power of strangers, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, and to restore in a manner to our country provinces which formerly belonged to it. The Cossacks, called *zaporojskié* (from the preposition *za*, ‘ beyond,’ and the word *parojskié*, ‘ cataract’), that is, from the other side of the cataracts of the Dnieper, were, for the most part, Little Russians. A land fortress, which at first had served them as a place of meeting, became in the sequel the dwelling-place of the unmarried Cossacks, whose sole means of subsistence was war and pillage. It is probable that the example of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, always armed, ever ready to drive back the enemy, first gave our cities of the south the idea of organizing a militia similar to theirs. The

province of Rezan, which of all others was the most exposed to the incursions of the brigands of the horde, had, more than any other, need of such defenders. Seduced by peculiar advantages, or probably still more by the powerful attraction of booty, young people, men without any avowed object, hastened to enrol themselves among the Cossacks. The name of Cossacks designates partisans, volunteers, men of valour, and not brigands, as several men of learning assert, quoting the Turkish dictionary as an authority. Of a truth this name was not meant as an insult, since brave paladins, who died for liberty, for their native land, and for religion, thought it a glory to bear it.”*

To complete our brief notice of these warlike tribes it may be stated, that since the year 1831, when the emperor re-established the regiments of the Ukraine, under the name of the Cossacks of Little Russia, the Cossacks altogether furnish no fewer than 164 regiments of cavalry, consisting of 101,760 men. Of these, seventy regiments of the line, and nineteen of the guards, are furnished by the Don Cossacks ; twenty-one line, and one of the guard, by those of the Black Sea ; eighteen line, by those of Little Russia ; thirty, by those of Siberia ; and the rest from Cossacks of the Ural, Upper Terek, and the Volga.

One of the privileges of which the Cossacks most proudly boast is, that no recruit belonging to any of their tribes can be chained, when on march to head-quarters, as the Russians are ; nor is it allowed to examine his person. In general, they may be regarded as far superior

* *Histoire de la Russie*, par Karamsin, tome 6. p. 476.

to the Russians, from their independence of spirit and their free form of government. The higher classes (*starchines*) receive an excellent education; but taking the whole government of the Don Cossacks, the average of scholars is not very high, there being only about one at school out of every 580 inhabitants. Some authorities state that three years is the period of service required of each Cossack, and that they serve from the age of eighteen to forty: others, more correctly, say four years, and that the age of service is, as quoted above, from fifteen to fifty. This applies, however, only to a time of peace; for, in case of war, there is no limit to the period of service; all under the age of fifty must march, leaving only the old at home.

That a change of circumstances can change the character of a people, is a fact which has held true in all ages. In no instance has it ever been more strongly confirmed than by the Cossack. At home he is the best-natured being in the world. We have seldom seen a more quiet, friendly creature. He seems fit to think of nothing but his fields and his poultry. One who knew nothing of him but from travelling through the district which we visited, would be almost tempted to call him soft and childish. But follow him to the battle—see him even in a march at the head of an invading army—and the Cossack will be found a very different being. He is no longer the quiet, unobtrusive husbandman, but the bold marauder—the true member of the fiercest of all the hordes which Russia can bring in countless swarms against Europe,—in fact, the reckless adventurer, whose character has been so well embodied by Beranger, in his noble ode, when he

paints him hastening a second time to the banks of the Seine, and disdainfully addressing his steed :—

*“ Efface, efface, en ta course nouvelle,
Temples, palais, mœurs, souvenirs, et lois.
Hennis d'orgueil, ô mon coursier fidèle,
Et foule aux pieds les peuples et les rois.”*

Nor is it merely in the field that the fierceness of the Cossack soldier is seen ; we have only to watch him doing duty as a policeman in a Russian crowd, pelting right and left with his heavy whip, and some idea will be formed of the character he displays in war. The very touch of the uniform seems to change his nature. Fortunately, however, he assumes his inoffensive character the moment the drill jacket is thrown aside. With his hand on the plough, he is once more our obliging friend of the wayside ; his campaigning fierceness so completely forgotten, that he scarcely raises his eye to exchange a look with us as we pass his humble door.

The picture of the Cossacks drawn by Sir Walter Scott is so vivid and complete that we cannot refrain from giving it. Its accuracy reminds us of the singular privilege which genius has, of always doing greater justice to a subject than an ordinary mind can do, even when its opportunities of becoming acquainted with the subject have been greater. Except during his short visit to Paris in 1815, the author of the *Life of Napoleon* never saw Cossacks in his life, yet the following passage from that work surpasses every description of them to be met with in books of travels :—

“ The natives on the banks of the Don and the Volga hold their lands by military service, and enjoy certain

immunities and prescriptions, in consequence of which each individual is obliged to serve four years in the Russian armies. They are trained from early childhood to the use of the lance and sword, and familiarized to the management of a horse peculiar to the country,—far from handsome to appearance, but tractable, hardy, swift and sure-footed beyond any breed perhaps in the world. At home, and with his family and children, the Cossack is kind, gentle, generous, and simple; but when in arms and in a foreign country, he resumes the predatory, and sometimes the ferocious habits of his ancestors, the roving Scythians. As the Cossacks receive no pay,* plunder is generally their object; and as prisoners were deemed a useless encumbrance, they granted no quarter, until Alexander promised a ducat for every Frenchman whom they brought in alive. In the actual field of battle their mode of attack is singular. Instead of acting in a line, a body of Cossacks, about to charge, disperse at the word of command, very much in the manner of a fan suddenly flung open, and joining in a loud yell or *hourra*, rush, each acting individually, upon the object of attack, whether infantry, cavalry, or artillery; to all of which they have been in this wild way of fighting formidable assailants. But it is as light cavalry that the Cossacks are perhaps unrivalled. They and their horses have been known to march one hundred miles in twenty-four hours, without halting. They plunge into woods, swim rivers, thread passes, cross deep morasses, and penetrate through deserts of snow, without undergoing material loss, or suffering from fatigue. No Russian army with a large body of

* This is true only of the time of peace.

Cossacks in front can be liable to surprise; nor, on the other hand, can an enemy surrounded by them ever be confident against it. In covering the retreat of their own army, their velocity, activity, and courage render pursuit by the enemy's cavalry peculiarly dangerous; and in pursuing a flying enemy their qualities are still more redoubtable. In the campaign of 1806-7, the Cossacks took the field in great numbers, under their celebrated hetman, or ataman, Platoff, who, himself a Cossack, knew their peculiar capacity for warfare, and raised their fame to a pitch which it had not attained in former European wars."*

So wonderful and so rapid then is the progress of even a barbarous tribe when animated by the spirit of liberty. The men whom we have seen, only three short centuries ago, a mere handful of fugitive shepherds or lawless marauders of the Ukraine—without institutions, and even without a name—with nothing to unite them but that love of freedom which we have just referred to; these obscure men have already become one of the most formidable of the tribes of Europe, hovering on her borders in ominous numbers, and preparing ere long to shake—shall we say to ascend—the proudest of her thrones.

* *Scott's Life of Napoleon*, Chapter on the year 1807.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STEPPES.

Comforts of travelling without a dinner — Crossing the DNIÉPER — Account of that river — Its falls — Journey by moonlight — Concert of dogs and poultry — Willows — Symptoms of approaching barrenness — *Adjamka* — Russian wells and our morning ablutions — Flies — Increasing heat — ELIZABETHGAOD — Jews — Water-melons — Appearance of the people — Trees disappear — Cultivation ceases — Entrance on the STEPPES — Account of these regions — Herds of horses — Numerous birds — Gazelle — Pelican — Serpent — A Souvenir of Russia — Woman's kindness prized by the stranger — The traveller's loneliness — Mournful thoughts.

SMALL is the number of readers who will deny that it is “mighty unpleasant” to be told by the landlord of the inn which you have reached after a long day's journey, and in which you had fondly hoped to dine as travellers only can dine, that the said inn affords nothing to appease your wants except milk and—no bread. But smaller still is the number of those who will deny that it is yet more unpleasant to be told, after you have got your portmanteau, writing-case, night-cap, and other comfortables restored to their place in the carriage, from which you had prematurely removed them, in the hope of a quiet night's rest, and just when the postilion is turning his ear to catch the brief but peremptory “All right!” which is to send you galloping off with all the speed that six good horses and a well-plied whip can command,—still more unpleasant is it, we say, to be told, at that interesting

moment, that a good dinner is to be got after all—that the cook had forgotten there were so many good things in the house, but is now ready to produce them, if you will but change your mind, and stay all night.

Yet such, or very nearly such, was our unhappy case at the inhospitable Krementchoug, where we have been holding the long discussion about the Cossacks with which the last chapter concludes. No one, therefore, will be surprised that we should be in such bad humour with that city, and have scarcely a good word to say of it. But that neither our wrath nor our hunger were very malignant, may be inferred from the fact, that although on setting out we fully intended to hold a midnight banquet at the first post-station we should reach, yet once in motion, we altogether forgot the very agreeable and very essential duty of *dining*, until *next morning* at breakfast, when we had got over at least sixty good miles of road,—an anachronism of which, it is but justice to confess, we have very seldom been guilty, but which ought to immortalize us, as we are probably the first and the only travellers who ever forgot their dinner.

In fact, the night was so beautiful, with its soft summer air breathing on us so gently, and the fair moon and ten thousand glorious stars looking down on us so benignantly, that we travelled on without pausing, as if food and sleep, the mere wants of the body, were subjects too vulgar to be thought of, when such sights were around us to occupy the mind.

Nor will we part on bad terms even with Krementchoug itself. As we wish to part friends with all *men*,—to say as little evil of them as possible, and all the good that

conscience will permit,—so do we wish to part from, and so do we wish to speak of, all *places*. Readily therefore do we admit that our recollections of Krementchoug are brightened by one redeeming object—its noble river. As the reader must have long ago discovered that we are a little crazy on the subject of large rivers, and fall hopelessly in love with each new one that comes across our path, he will not wonder that our wrathful remembrances of Krementchoug are mollified, when we think of the beautiful waters by which it is laved.

The Dnieper is indeed worthy of admiration. The moment our carriage stopped we hastened to get a glimpse of it before night should have concealed it from our view; and seldom have we gazed on a more imposing tide. The sun was just sinking below the horizon; but, as if reluctant to quit so fair a sight, his parting beams still lingered on the burnished waters, which flowed so sullenly that they seemed scarcely to move—a silent but mighty stream.

Immediately after leaving Krementchoug we crossed this river by a bridge of boats, not unlike that on the Rhine at Coblenz. Shortly after, we had to cross another arm of it, the bridge of which is so long that it seemed a journey before we got to the end of it. Tramp, tramp went the feet of our horses on the boards, as if the monotonous concert would continue all night.

Though it washes the lands of a barbarous people, the Dnieper is entitled to the honours of a classic stream; for it was well known to the ancients, under the high-sounding name of the Borysthenes, and in the middle ages bore the equally euphonious appellation of the Dana-

pirs. It rises in the government of Smolensk, near the sources which feed the Volga and the Dwina, among the Alaunian hills, where they are covered by the southern skirts of the great Volkonsky forest already spoken of. It is swollen by the Beresina and numerous other tributaries, in the earlier part of its course, and at Kieff is so large, that the bridge which there crosses it is 1638 paces long. After leaving the government of Kieff, it forms the boundary of those of Pultava, Ekaterinoslaf, and Kherson, and enters the Black Sea, after a course of nearly 1000 miles. Except the Danube, there is no river in Europe which drains such a large extent of country. It is navigable all the way from Smolensk to Kieff, but farther down its bed is so full of rocks, that at one part of its course it becomes necessary to transport goods for a great distance by land, in order to avoid the cataracts. There is no direct navigation, therefore, from Krementchoug down to Alexandrofsky; but at the latter place the river is again navigable, and continues to be so throughout the remaining two hundred miles of its course. At Kherson it begins to form a *liman*, in many places six miles broad, which, being afterwards joined by that of the Bog, forms a kind of inland sea fifty miles from the Euxine.

The banks of the Dnieper, especially on the eastern side, are in general high. Sturgeon, shad, pike, and carp, abound in it. Of the seventy islands which occur before the commencement of the liman, some are very fertile, while some abound with serpents, wild-cats, and other animals. The largest island, as formerly mentioned, is famed in Cossack story, as the place where the Zapo-

rogues established their camp. In the upper part of its course it is frozen from November to April, and at Kieff from December to March; the bridges, consequently, must be removed in October, or the beginning of November, and cannot be replaced again till summer has set in, without the certainty of their being carried off by the floating-ice in spring.

The great cataracts of this river, known by the name of *Paroghi*, are said to be well worth visiting. They are situated a short way above Ekaterinoslaf, and cover from forty to fifty miles of the river's course. Thirteen considerable falls have been reckoned, but it is only in the autumn or winter that they are worth seeing, the high floods of the early summer covering them so completely that few of the falls are then perceptible. At the season referred to, the barks of the Cossacks float safely over the loftiest ledges and the wildest whirlpools; but the river still presents a most magnificent sight, careering along, as it does, in a bed at least one thousand feet wide, which for miles on miles is one continued sheet of roaring foam.

A new people, a new language, and new manners presented themselves the moment we crossed the river which has now been described: for, though the whole of the tract of 270 miles from Krementchoug to Odessa cannot be said to possess the barren, deserted character which the term *steppe* implies, yet, even in the fertile portions of the government of Kherson, through which the first part of this journey lay, such a complete change is visible, when compared with the districts we had left, that we were at once prepared for the lonely and singular wastes at which we were soon to arrive.

We were not without companions in our delightful night-journey across the Steppic border ; for the waning moon and her attendant stars continued their faithful watch through many a league. We had plenty of music, too,—not exactly that of the spheres, but from the dogs of the country, which kept up such a continued barking, from side to side of every valley, that it seemed as if we had got into a region peopled only by the canine race. The numerous packs of wolves which infest these districts compel the herdsman to keep his trusty sentinels constantly on the watch, both summer and winter.

Nor were the dogs our only choristers ; for no sooner had they gone to sleep than our friends of the roost took up their melodious note—cackle, cackle went the song, till broad day put them to shame.

In the course of the night we passed through *Alexandria*, a district town of Kherson, thirty-eight miles from Kremenchoug, and sundry villages so insignificant as to be unworthy of having their barbarous names recorded. As we passed along we observed that the chill of midnight did not prevent some of the wearied peasants from sleeping in the open air, at the post-houses.

The country in which we found ourselves at dawn was still populous and fertile, but there was scarcely a tree within sight except the willow, which is here larger than we have ever seen it in any other parts of Europe. It is cultivated for the wattles which it yields, and of which the greater part of the houses are still formed. Carriages and waggons are met by the way, but in much smaller numbers than to the north of the Dnieper. We encoun-

tered little to attract our notice in the course of the morning, with the exception of a large body of cavalry, marching in very straggling order.

Passing the long village of *Novaya Praga*, we breakfasted at the hamlet of *Adjamka*, where we were like to be eaten up, honey, roast fowls, and all, by myriads of flies. Just as in the north, the people of the places we stop at in the morning are always amazed to see us make such a fuss about water to wash ourselves. Water they regard as intended for better purposes than to wear away the human skin with. We were here able to get plenty of it from the well in the large court-yard, where we performed our ablutions, raising the bucket with a wheel and cable fit for a coal-pit. Most of the houses are low clay cottages, with whitewashed chimneys, so small and neat that nothing can look better.

Books are a rare sight in Russia. At this place, however, while rummaging through the fly-covered closet for plates to help out our breakfast service, we actually discovered a suspicious-looking volume or two; and we record the fact from its being the only instance in which we ever saw a book, or anything like one, at a Russian inn.

Having for the fiftieth time repaired our carriage, long since become a perilous wreck, we sallied forth once more for the desert. The weather had now become fiercely warm. Between dust and heat, we were almost suffocated before entering the district town of *Elizabethgrad*, forty-four miles from Alexandria. Symptoms of a change of climate are here more numerous than ever,

in the new and luscious fruits with which the wide market-ground was strewn. It is a strange, black, desolated, and yet populous place, of 2,700 inhabitants, in a parched, treeless hollow. The streets were full of Jews, prowling about in large scowling hats, from beneath which their black curled locks hang down on the long robe, which is as filthy and black as all the rest of their dress.

It was here that we first got the water-melon in perfection,—one of the greatest luxuries the traveller meets with. Unlike the common melon, it is perfectly round, and generally about the size of a man's head; the rind never becomes yellow, but even when ripest is of a very dark green. When cut, the fruit is found to be full of a delicious red pulp, which melts away in the mouth most luxuriously. It is not so sweet nor so heavy-tasted as other melons, and can therefore be eaten in much greater quantities. In the burning heats, which now continued all the time we remained in Russia, we devoured many of these melons daily, and never felt the smallest inconvenience from them. This fruit would be a great acquisition to our English dessert; but no care of the cultivator can make up for the sultry sky and arid wastes of its native climes. It drinks juice from the very sands to which the clouds deny their rain, and affords one of the thousand proofs of the wisdom and bounty displayed by Providence in the adaptation of its gifts to the varying wants of each varying region. In countries watered by few rivers, and seldom visited by rain, what could be more grateful than a fruit easily raised, and extending through a long season, full of one of the most delicious

substitutes for water that ever refreshed the thirsty wanderer.

Horses having been quickly procured, we left Elizabethgrad with very little ceremony. As we journeyed on we could not help being struck with the fact that the inhabitants of this region are small and ill-made. The men of the south are far inferior to the Russians in figure, and the women are as far behind the Russian females as those are behind their own husbands. There appears to be less of Turkish seclusion than among the Muscovites, for women of all ages may be seen out of doors: more of them are engaged in field-labour than in Central Russia.

Up to this point cultivation has not quite disappeared; there are still extensive tracks under the plough, with numerous flocks of cattle, and stacks of hay as large as hills, near the houses. Every thing shows, however, that we are bordering close on the Steppes. There is a threatening heaviness in the sky—an oppression on the breathing—a growing desolation in the aspect of every thing around; plainly telling that we are fast leaving the fertile scenes which have bordered our route for now nearly a thousand miles. Not a tree is to be seen, look the whole horizon round; and, except some small bush by a peasant's hut, there is not so much as an osier for the winter blast to bend.

At length, a few miles from the town last named, the gradually lessening signs of cultivation entirely vanish: we were now fairly in the STEPPES—one of the gloomiest, loneliest, most remarkable regions in the world. Though there are still some spots under the plough, they bear so

small a proportion to the wide extent before the eye, that they increase rather than diminish its general character of barrenness. For the most part, nothing is to be seen but one wide level stretch of rank grass, now brown and crackling with age : for though called a waste, these regions are not a barren waste ; they are covered far and wide with grass—strong and coarse, indeed, yet readily eaten by the flocks of the country. In spring, when covered with lively green, these plains must be pleasant to the eye ; in autumn their withered look almost burns it.

This singular tract forms a part of those wide regions known as the Steppes of Europe, which are divided into the Higher and Lower.

With the Lower Steppes we have nothing to do ; they lie far away from our present course, at the eastern extremity of Europe, separated from the Higher by the lofty range between the Don and the Volga. It may be mentioned, however, that the Lower Steppes cover a surface twice as large as the area of the British islands, no part of which, except to a trifling extent near Astracan, is under cultivation. In general they are covered with salt and sand, except in some places where a poor grass may now and then find root among stunted shrubs. They are supposed to lie many hundred feet below the level of the sea.

The Higher Steppes, in which we now were, although at present less neglected, were for a long period occupied exclusively by the Nomadic tribes of the Petcheneges, who afterwards made way for the Polofiti—a people who wandered along the Dnieper, from the mouth of the

Vorskla to that of the Ross. Neither of these races had any turn for agriculture; but finding that the soil of itself produced sufficient grass for their flocks, they left it as they found it—a region covered with coarse herbage, without tree or house; and such it continues to this day. These steppes lie along the northern shore of the Black Sea, from which they spread back many hundred miles. They commence near the Don in the east, and, crossing the Dnieper, spread westward up its right bank, till they meet the outskirts of the fertile regions of Little Russia. Of the peninsula of the Crimea, connected with them by a low neck of land, three-fourths are steppes. Its southern shores are very high, especially near the Chatyr Dag, whose summit is more than 5000 feet above the sea. In general, however, the surface of the Higher Steppes does not rise more than 200 feet above the level of the sea.

The traveller crossing the Steppes may occasionally be greeted by a cultivated spot, in some hollow where there is water; and in such a place a few shrubs may be found; but, in general, there is nothing to be seen except a coarse rank grass, the sight of which becomes at last as wearisome to the eye as absolute barrenness. Among the rough bushes found in the few places alluded to, the most frequent is the species of bramble (*Rubus saxatilis*), the fruit of which has already been so frequently mentioned as a favourite in the markets of the north.

The pasturage is not suited for cows or oxen; but horses thrive well on it. Of these, accordingly, immense herds may be seen. The poorest inhabitant of the

Steppes, especially among the Don Cossacks, has three or four horses; and the wealthy possess *tabunes* or herds, containing as many as 1200 noble steeds. Of these large herds, none are kept in the stalls, except such as are used for the saddle; but their number is very small. All the others are kept in the open air, and provide for themselves the whole year round. In summer it is no difficult matter for them to forage abundantly; but, in winter, it is with difficulty they procure enough to keep in life, by scraping away the snow with their feet. The reeds by the rivers serve them as food, when the snow is too deep on the ordinary pastures. *Khutors*, or buildings consisting of sheds and stables, are built in many places; and at these the horses are assembled when a purchase is to be made. The owners draw large sums from government, for supplying the cavalry every year.

The soil being sufficiently productive wherever any care is bestowed on its cultivation, every family in the Steppes is able to raise enough of grain for its own support. The people in general bear a great resemblance to the Cossacks of the Ukraine; but there are many colonists from Germany and other parts of Europe in the more fertile districts. Education being well attended to in these colonies, the general proportion of scholars in the government of Kherson is more favourable than in the adjoining provinces.

Of four-footed game, little is found in any part of the Steppes. They abound, however, with animals of a less noble kind—such as wolves, foxes, wild cats, martens, marmots, dwarf otters, the *zaiga-gazelle*, and hares.

These solitudes seem to be the favourite haunts of birds innumerable ; swans, bustards, partridges, quails, snipes, and falcons, abound in every corner of them, and in some places the pelican is not uncommon. Reptiles, and especially snakes, are extremely numerous.

These notices will show that we were now indeed within a dreary region ; but we shall try to lighten our way across it, by summoning back one happy remembrance. This world of ours would be a very miserable one, did we not make the most of the bright gleams which now and then illumine our pilgrimage through it.

Where, then, we have to ask—not of the reader (though authors, from time immemorial, have had the privilege of asking a great many questions, and some of them very impertinent ones, of that patient, much-tried, and mysterious personage, “the reader”)—but it is of our companions in these now closing Excursions that we ask, was it on this or some other desert wild of Russia, that a fair hand sent each of us the little flower which we vowed to treasure, as a remembrance of distant plains, and—of her ?

Dreary as the desert was, the remembrance of that simple gift renders it bright to the eye of memory. A flower—such a tasteful souvenir, presented in scenes so remote, where there is little but gloom and desolation, and things unlovely—is something more valuable than it may appear to him who has never known the dulness, the misery, the utter prostration of heart, which occasionally oppresses the traveller, while wandering over regions in themselves most rude, and in which he finds

himself as one alone, without a single link binding him to the hearts of those around—where all are strangers, and regard him as but a stranger—where no service is rendered for love, but for lucre, and is rendered to the next comer with the same mechanical promptitude as to him—where, in short, there is nothing to tell him that he is still a member of the human family, from which, in his loneliness, he is at times ready to regard himself as for ever disunited. He who has never been in circumstances to experience this feeling, can scarcely know how much any of the little courtesies or playful attentions of ordinary life affect one in a foreign land, and especially when rendered by the sex which, in every clime, is endowed with the self-denying grace of thinking more of the feelings of others than men ever do.

Of those, however, who have experienced the feeling now described, none will wonder that we should make mention of an incident so trifling. Blessings on the hand, then, that bestowed this little token! Its bright colours have not yet faded; but even when it shall have withered away from its present shelter, it will still be fresh in our memory. Though separated from them by many a league, which of us will not sometimes look back to the noble halls where the kind bestower rules? If women knew how well they are remembered for a kindness, be it even but a trifle such as this, rendered to the stranger, they would feel themselves amply repaid.

Travelling has its pleasures—but it has also its pains; and that just alluded to is one of the greatest of them—the feeling, namely, of being abandoned—of having no friend near who cares whether you are joyful or sad

—whether you are in health or in sickness. It is not in the desert only that heaviness and sorrow take possession of the pilgrim. What sojourner in strange lands has not, even while in the heart of the most crowded cities, occasionally been saddened by thoughts to which he dare scarce give utterance? “I am alone!” will he sometimes say to himself,—“cut off from those who love me. Were I to fall ill—to die, in this populous, but to me desolate scene, what hand would compose my limbs—what step would follow my bier? Those of the mercenary—who would feel for me as little as for the bough which he sees torn by the wintry blast from the stem which it adorned. Warm hearts will throb for me far away, and young cheeks be moist; but what eye would *here* weep for me? What friend would cast a flower on my lonely resting-place? Not one!—not one! The night-breeze will sing my only monody—the night-bird be the only visitant to my grave!”

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DISMAL BORDERS OF THE BLACK SEA.

Kompaneerka—Grassy road—Quick travelling—*Sougakley*—Village settlers in the Steppes—Geese—Night-scene at *Wodenaya*—Scotch names—Many horses—Drive across the desert—Poplars—NICOLAEFF—Its public buildings—Gardens—Ships—Dockyards—Not flourishing—Its strange houses—Scenes in the sandy market place—"Crawfish"—Cooking-house—Crossing the Bog—Trailing for crawfish—Account of the Bog and its liman—More night-scenes—Climate—Draw near the Black Sea—Italian wanderers—Birds—Flowers—*Adjelik*—Ships—Scenes near ODESSA.

THE observations contained in the last chapter will have prepared the reader for the general character of the country in which we found ourselves soon after leaving Elizabethgrad. Sixteen miles from that place stands the post-house of *Kompaneevka*, a poor hut on the wing of a hamlet composed of cottages small enough to be the dwellings of pigmies. In its gardens are a few trees, which seem to thrive tolerably, while the plots of ground where the soil has been recently dug or ploughed show such a rich composition, that it is evidently not from barrenness, but neglect, that the Steppes are so naked. The crops—what few there are of them—are not all gathered in; fine herds are frequent along the downs. Generally speaking, however, the view is singularly dreary, without a speck for the eye to rest upon.

The road is good and easy; we drove over it as

smoothly as on a new-shorn lawn. In fact, it is nothing but a grassy track, so wide, that, though many waggons and carriages pass, there seems to be a new line for each : there are no ruts ; all is one smooth space from side to side. The road is so like the country on either hand, that, to prevent people from wandering out of it, black and white posts are planted on both sides of the way, at every quarter of a verst.

The large village of *Scugakley* presents a singularly striking scene. After passing through a broken valley, almost exclusively composed of a dull clay, except at some spots, where a soft white sandstone peeps out, a confused medley of small huts appears scattered over a sort of witches' glen, with huge grey stones rising here and there amongst them, higher than the chimneys ; but neither tree nor shrub is visible in the whole scene. Some houses creep up to the summit of the ridge, where, having no kind of shelter round them, they present a most lonely sight.

As we alight at the posthouse, a Jew is seated by a large heap of gourds and melons ; near him some handsome Armenians are in earnest talk about the strangers who have just arrived ; and farther off a few soldiers are mustering for parade. All this in a place which is literally but a desert surprised us not a little. Even in spite of these signs of life, there was something so death-like in the silence and general aspect of the spot, that we always looked to see whether the people did not issue from the grey caverns,—whether they were not, after all, beings conjured up by our fancy, rather than creatures of flesh and blood like ourselves.

The screams of their large flocks of geese reassured us of the fact that the villagers were but men. We could not understand, however, in what way the poor geese contrived to subsist,—streams, or even pools, being unknown for leagues on leagues around. In most parts of the Steppes it is necessary to dig very deep before water can be got; and in seasons of unusual drought even this supply is dried up. It surprised us to find the handsomest telegas of Russia made in this sequestered glen. Their soil needs so little from them, that they throw the dung into the hollows, to be washed away by the rain.

After passing this place, our attention is drawn to myriads of strange birds, with which the grass is covered on all sides. Some of them are large, and of heavy flight; but a small bird resembling the lark is also to be seen in countless flocks. Nobody touches them. The largest bird we see is a species of bustard, peculiar, we believe, to this region, and therefore known as “the fowl of the Steppes” (*Otis tetrax*). The magpie, which loves cottages and sheltering trees, and is therefore so abundant in other parts of Russia, flies this naked land.

The distance to the next small village, *Gromokley*, is twelve miles, which, with five good horses, and on roads so smooth, are accomplished in little more than an hour. The post-houses are far from bad; some of them are even better than those of the north. The floors of all the houses, however, are of clay. The room we dined in here had no fault but the pleasant one of smelling like a geese-pen,—a very common odour in all the houses of the district.

It was now late; but a night in the Steppes was some-

thing worth sallying forth for. Once more, then, were we on our way. What silence! how still, how breathless! The night-birds seemed frightened into peace. The dog himself is rarely heard among the thinly-scattered habitations. Even the sound of our wheels is not to be distinguished, so smoothly do they roll on the rich turf.

At *Wodenaya*, a lone post-house, where we halted at midnight, we found the common room heated like an oven. In it people were stretched asleep on slabs so near the stove, and consequently so hot, that when we touched the stones they almost burnt the hand. Such is the idea which Russians have of comfort! now sleeping in the open air, and anon stewing in a forcing-house! Even a Norwegian sheepcot is preferable to this Russian oven, or rather oven of Russians.

Though the poor master was in grief,—for his child was sick,—he tended us with his best care, and opened another room, where some of us slept on the narrow benches in a milder atmosphere than that of the first apartment. Others of us kept by the carriage, which proved an excellent berth, with nought but silence around, and the “starry-mantled night” walking solemnly above. The majesty of night is always impressive, but never more deeply so than in the wide and tenantless waste, where the mind, having no near object of earthly interest to rest upon, rises to higher and holier converse above.

The first intruder on this solitude was the lagging moon, on whose approach the few objects distinguishable in the almost unbroken horizon were silvered by her light with beauty beyond that of day.

In rolling about this wide world, one meets with familiar names in strange out-of-the-way places. We never expected to hear a Scotch name in the Steppes of Russia, and much less at such an untimely hour; but just as we were ready to start before dawn, up came a Russian, who had seen our papers with our courier, to tell us that he himself was of Scotch descent, as his name of Lesly well showed. He could not resist the only opportunity he might ever have of speaking with people from the far land which gave his fathers birth, and especially with one who bore his own name, as one of our party, though not a native of Scotland, happened to do.

Bidding adieu to "bonny Lesly," we again flew across the desert, as swiftly as if our good steeds had not felt the carriage behind them. The country now becomes so desolate, that in some stages we travel from station to station without seeing a house. Plenty of horses, however, are feeding on every hand; they are as numerous as the herds of oxen that roam through the pastures of the Ukraine. Long files of them are scattered on the downs, as far away as we can see; they wander free and unmolested, attended only by a single guide, who is able to take charge of as many as forty of them. The people say that here *a horse costs nothing, and his keep less*; and, in proof of the truth of the saying, we may mention that each postmaster has at least half a hundred in his stables, and of excellent quality, as our galloping pace can testify.

We drove forty-two miles this morning without seeing a single tree, except a few tall poplars, in very thriving

condition, near a stiff imperial-looking place where cavalry-horses are kept. The ground in cultivation about it bears such good crops, that it is astonishing that more of this immense tract has not been reclaimed. After passing this, no human being was to be seen for miles; but we were constantly discerning large herds of horses, and birds flew about us in thousands.

At last, through the cloud of dust raised by our wheels, we got sight of NICOLAEFF, extending along a high bank on the east side of a small river, towards which we descended by a rapid declivity. Just as we were about to cross the bridge a little girl ran from a house in the suburbs, calling out "*Raki! Raki!*" at the same time exhibiting something red from her basket. We thought it must be some delightful ruddy fruit; but the fruit proved to be "craw-fish," *écrevisses*, piping hot from the pan, ten of them for four copeeks, or less than a halfpenny.

NICOLAEFF, once one of the greatest building stations and arsenals of the Russian fleet, is a district town of Kherson, 111 miles from *Elizabethgrad*. In the short space of forty-six years it has shot up into splendour, and again almost sunk back into decay. Russia is the favourite soil of mushrooms; cities which were forced up to please some passing fancy disappear, or at least lose their importance, before we have time to know of their existence. Let some Tzar take it into his head that Astrachan or Tiflis is better suited for the seat of government than the present capital, and in a few years St. Petersburg itself will become what this fading place now is. Prince Potemkin ordered it to be begun in 1791;

the admiralty of the Black Sea was removed to it from Kherson; showy structures sprung up; an artificial prosperity was fostered; it became, in short, one of the "marvels" which French authors were so busy in trumpeting over the world in praise of Russia. But all its glories are now disappearing. In spite of a something of elegance in its air beyond its sister-towns, it still looks deserted; for the tide of imperial and plastering care has forsaken it, since Sebastopol became the chief station of the Black Sea fleet. In place of 30,000, it now contains little more than 8000 inhabitants.

This city of the waste stands on a parched table which overhangs the liman of the Bog, just at the point where that ample river is joined by a small tributary. *Liman* means neither a swampy lake, as it is sometimes explained, nor an arm of the sea, though it looks very like it: it denotes an estuary formed by the still water between what is properly the mouth of a river and the main sea. Several Russian rivers terminate in a liman, which is often, as in this case, fifty miles long, and deep enough for the largest vessels. The dockyards are at the foot of the height above the bridge. Along the top of the bank below the bridge runs a public walk, planted with trees and flowering shrubs: behind this walk stand the more important of the public buildings, such as the College of Cadets, the handsomest of the whole; the admiral's residence, the observatory, the admiralty, &c. Behind these, again, run the wide sandy streets of the town.

A large edifice was in progress, composed entirely of the stone of the country—a species of limestone thickly

encrusted with sea-shells. Many prisoners in chains were at work on it. In the dock-yards there appeared to be nothing going on except the repairs of a rotten ship or two. Some fifty-gun ships were anchored in the estuary, under the walk; but otherwise we saw no bustle, nor symptom of naval preparations. Several Englishmen are employed in the dock-yards; but this place having always been of more consequence as a winter harbour for the fleet than as a building station, there were not so many here as in the other ports of the Black Sea.

The dingy splendour and drowsy bustle of the public quarter, in which all the places now spoken of are situated, deceive the stranger. Nicolaeff, to one who wanders no farther, appears not unworthy of its pretensions; but the *real* town has not yet been seen. It is only on penetrating backwards that the true city is detected; a far-spreading assemblage of straight lines, endlessly long, and of huts marvellously low, all with grey roofs, composed of strong reeds, or thin unpainted boards.

The market-place is large enough for a town to stand upon. It is a desert, full of dreary, drifting sand, on which the sun beats with strength sufficient to roast the governor's eggs. Fruit, which in such a climate is more than a luxury, is very abundant. Large heaps of coarse plums were lying mixed with piles of gourds and melons, which last fruit is so abundant, that every peasant we saw was refreshing himself with a slice. There were many carts filled with the large red berries of a species of hawthorn, and which are said to be of great value in years

when grain is scarce. Apples, better than any we had yet seen in our journey, were mixed with bad pears: in general neither of these fruits is brought to any perfection in Russia.

The only kind of fish which we saw exhibited in the market-place was the *raki*, already named, which forms a great part of the food of the lower orders. It is a sweet and delicate fish, lodged in a shell as large as that of a small crab; but as each shell contains scarcely more substance than a couple of good gooseberries, a man must suck many a dozen before he can make a meal of them. Under the name of *Astacus fluviatilis*, it is well known to naturalists, as being found in many of the rivers of Europe, especially in those of France, where the sport of taking it is very common. Though not a stranger to the sea, it seems to thrive best in fresh water, getting into a hole in the banks, or ensconcing itself by the edge of a stone, and there watching an opportunity to pounce on minnows and other small fry.

In one corner of the market-place is a cooking-establishment, where Russian life may be seen in genuine purity. This well-frequented temple, built of wood, and open at the sides, is traversed by alleys from end to end; in some of which women, with brawny arms and broad glowing faces, were toiling among their fires and saucepans, while at others ladies equally charming were tempting the passengers with savoury steams from soups, stews, boiled raki, and tea, all arranged in most seductive order on the wooden counters. Of the qualities of the food it becomes us not to speak; but its cheapness

none will gainsay, for a man may have a dinner here for one penny !

The people of Nicolaeff have a wild, half-Asiatic look. Many Jewesses were amongst them, in turbans glittering with gilt embroidery. The fuller form of all the women points them out as distinct from the Cossack race. By each stall or heap of fruit in the square, a little ragged piece of canvas was raised among the sand, by way of tent, with sprawling sticks projecting in every direction ; beneath this lolled the mistress of the store, with her swarthy brats about her, whom she had difficulty to keep in unruly order. The group would have made a good picture.

Between the heat and the sand, Nicolaeff must be perfectly insupportable to all who have it in their power to live elsewhere. The post-house affords very fair quarters, but the annoyances just mentioned induced us to set forward early in the afternoon. We ferried across the liman, a short way below the town, in company with a crowd of passengers, in a clumsy ferry-boat. It took us nearly an hour to make the passage ; but the evening was so fine that even the naked heights on either hand looked beautiful. They continue equally bare throughout the whole fifty miles from this to the point where the Bog and Dnieper unite to form a larger liman.

While waiting for horses on the west side, we witnessed the very primitive way in which the people here fish for raki. Two women—there was no danger of mistaking them for sea-nymphs—each holding one end of a piece of strong canvas, which is six or seven feet long, and is

stretched between two poles, advanced into the water till it reached the waist, pushing the canvas before them with their poles, after they had sunk it to the bottom of the water. When they had gone as far as they could walk in the tide, they turned back, still raking the ground before them, to the shore, where they emptied their net, if so it can be called, of a mass of slime, sprats, and raki.

The Bog, known as the Hippanis to Greek and Roman authors, rises to the S.E. of Tarnopol, in Podolia, and joins the Dnieper near Oczakow, after a course of 480 miles. It flows very smoothly; but, owing to a series of falls in the neighbourhood of Sekolnie, and sand-banks in other places, it is not navigable above Nicolaeff, except after heavy rains, or during the thaws of spring. It was at one time the frontier between Russia and Turkey; but the Tzar now rules many hundred miles south of this river. It is 520 feet broad, even a considerable way above the commencement of the liman.

After we left its shores, the number of birds became hourly more remarkable. In other respects the country is as desolate as ever. We had intended stopping to eat the dinner brought with us from Nicolaeff, at the first post-house, a mud-floored place with a flat roof; but, on looking in, the hut appeared so uninviting, that, though hungry as wolves, we held on fifteen miles farther, to *Sassitskaya*, an imperial post-house—that is, one enjoying some privileges beyond the common ones, and always well furnished.

Another stage of the silent desert brought us to the post-house of *Tiligoul*, where we made beds of hay for ourselves, and slept till morning. We here got a lesson

about Russian travelling, which we should have learnt long before now had we stopped oftener at night : it is this—never to stop while on a journey in Russia when you can get horses, and when the roads are good. In a country where people on public business are constantly in motion on all the great routes, the chance is, that, if you go to bed trusting that the horses will be kept for you till the morning, you will have the mortification of learning, when you awake, that the horses have been required by some official personage or by couriers : or, if delay should not arise from this cause, rain enough may have fallen to spoil the roads for the day. In the present instance, when we were ready to start in the morning, it was announced that all the horses were out, in consequence of some government people having come up in the night. It was by no means pleasant to be thus detained so near our journey's end ; but, being assisted in our negotiations with the post-master by a government courier, who spoke French, and, like all his brethren, wherever we have met them in our journey, was most anxious to help us, we got out of our dilemma much sooner than we had expected. Had we been compelled to remain, there was little to amuse us during our delay, except a large Thibet goat, a race which thrives well in some parts of the Steppes.

From what we heard here, the climate of the region would appear to be far from wholesome. The days are excessively hot, and the nights, except in the middle of summer, very cold. As the north winds sweep these naked plains without mercy, those who are any time exposed to the chill night-blast in travelling are in cou-

siderable danger. The day is always far advanced before anything like warmth is felt while traversing this particular belt of the Steppes.

The thought that our toilsome journey was drawing to a close enabled us to start as merry as the birds that were wheeling round us. We had not gone far before we perceived that we were approaching the sea, which here sends some quiet branches several miles inland. On the maps they appear to break the high road so seriously, that we had imagined there would be some ferries to cross in following the shore to Odessa; but nothing of the kind occurs after passing the Bog.

Objects now began to assume, as we thought, an Asiatic aspect; flowers and birds not known to us as European—the former rank and gaudy, the latter small and restless—were presenting themselves in great numbers every moment. The verdure, or what had been verdure, though close and tough, was as withered and ugly as if the simoom had swept over it. At length, from a high ridge, we beheld the BLACK SEA itself, glancing calm below us in the sun. No words can tell how fresh and beautiful it looked to the eye which had for weeks seen nothing but wearisome plains.

Shortly before reaching the sea we met, what we scarcely expected to meet in this lone region, a happy band of foreigners, driving along in an open car, on their way to the fair of Tiflis (by Nicolaeff and Kherson), with the smallest stock in trade that ever adventurers began the world with. The leaders of the party were a couple of Tyrolese and an Italian from Genoa, who had clubbed their means to purchase a few trained birds and

some fine dogs ; and these were all they had to carry them through the world ! While we wished the light-hearted wanderers “ good luck ” on their way, we could not help thinking that their poor companions, both winged and four-footed, would have hard work to feed so many masters.

At *Adjelik*, the last station, the dust was covering us inches thick : it is so fine as to make its way through the smallest opening. After resting awhile in a house near the sea, kept by Jews from Germany, we started for the fair city in which our journey was to terminate. It had now long been visible, stretching stately and warm above the sea ; but, beautiful as it looked, our attention was for a time distracted by the white sails of the vessels steering for the harbour, and the fresh dash of the waves on the beach ; for never did ships look more beautiful in our eyes, nor the murmur of the sea sound more welcome in our ears. Ere long, however, the worn and furrowed road ; the broken waggons strewed helplessly about on it ; lines of oxen toiling wearily on with grain ; travelling equipages whirling along amid clouds of dust ; houses becoming more numerous, all built of stones so full of sea-shells, that each dwelling looks an encrusted mass ; nets drying on the flat roofs and on the pebbly beach ; Cossack policemen riding about on every side of us ; and finally the barrier, at the line of entrenchment, beyond which the privileges of the free port do not extend, and where our passports were demanded ;—these told us that ODESSA itself was at hand, and at length we had the satisfaction of entering it in triumph, all as fresh and well as when we started from Moscow.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ODESSA.

Pleasant impressions—Improvement in the looks of the people—Site—History—Trade—Export of grain—Of wool—Crowds of carters and oxen—Shipping—The harbour—The winter—The climate—Dust—Now more healthy—The Lyceum—Resemblance to towns of Italy—Many Italians here—Poles—English—The British Consul-General—Kindness of our countrymen—A *Hutor*, or Summer Villa—Ravages of the locusts—Concert to frighten them—Dissolute character of the higher classes—Lady-cigars—The Opera—More specimens of the Jewish character—Statistics of our journey—Expenses of travelling in Russia—Living at Odessa—Marketing—The Hotel Richelieu and its good fare—Scenes of vice—Warning to tourists—Conclusion—Farewell to Russia—Glance at her resources—No probability that her manufactures can soon rival those of England.

WE shall never forget the pleasant sensations with which we rolled through the streets of Odessa on our way from the distant *barrière*. After the dreary and decaying cities to which we had been so long accustomed, its fresh houses and well-paved streets recalled us to ideas of prosperity and comfort. Instead of the deep sloughs which adorn most streets of the interior, we now had good and smooth pavement, on which our wheels, so long silent on the soft grass of the Steppes, sounded very pleasantly. People were seated at the windows, and gay robes were seen at every crossing—all as if we had got back to a civilized country. Most of the men were in the ordinary dress of Europe, the Russian garb being seldom seen here, and never but in the remote

quarters of the city. The shops too were like those of our more familiar experience, with large windows exhibiting the usual display of gaieties.

What struck us most, however, was the improvement in the appearance of the women. They actually had a *feminine* look—were something like human beings; and, if this remark be thought superfluous, the reader must remember that the terrible females we had been travelling amongst are the most forbidding harridans ever beheld.

As we advanced towards the gayer quarter, the crowd became still more lively. 'Change-hour being at hand, all the magnates of the city were assembled in groups in front of the Bourse, which stands immediately opposite the excellent hotel where we were to find repose. But, before saying more about our personal fortune, we must, in as few words as possible, make the reader acquainted with the situation, history, and commerce of the city of which we have now the honour to treat.

Odessa overhangs a wide and beautiful bay of the Black Sea, situated near two important estuaries, called the Khodjabeyskoi and the Kuialskoi estuaries, both formed by the great Kuialnek rivers. Its principal division extends along the top of a bold range of cliffs, commanding an extensive sea-view, and the ever-varying clusters of the ships of all nations floating in the harbour below. Immediately on the top of this cliff is the beautiful public walk, planted with flowering shrubs and trees, whose verdure is doubly welcome in a country so completely destitute of woods. A conspicuous spot near this walk is adorned with a statue of the late Duc de Riche-

lieu, who was governor of the city,—a work of such effeminate expression, that it was long before we could persuade ourselves it was not intended to represent a woman. On either side of this statue, and parallel to the summit of the cliffs, runs a line of splendid mansions, comprising the residences of the governor and the principal inhabitants. From this terrace a street branches off at right angles, communicating with the quarter in which the Opera, the Exchange, and the principal hotels are situated. From the Exchange run broad and regular streets in every direction, a few of them paved with broad slabs like the streets of Naples, and the rest macadamized. Some stretch along the shore, both north and south, some through a deep and rugged ravine to the southwest, and some, of great length, extend towards the country. In this last direction lie the public markets, the streets beyond which are exceedingly mean. The houses in the best quarters are very lofty and handsome, being generally built of a light-coloured stone, and roofed with sheets of iron or painted wood. The stone used in building is of the same composition as the rocks on which the city stands, and the many others which abound in the neighbourhood. It is a kind of semi-indurated limestone, containing a considerable portion of oxide of iron, and with such immense quantities of cockle-shells mixed up with the principal substance, that many of the houses have the rough appearance of an artificial grotto. The softness of this stone, which is such that it may be chipped with a hatchet, renders it very favourable for the more showy purposes of the architect.

Odessa does not occupy, as has generally been sup-

posed, the site of the ancient *Odessus*, for that classic port stood much nearer the mouth of the Borysthenes. The real site of the ancient *Odessus* (which is also spoken of by classic authors under the name of *Ordesus*) would appear to have been in the neighbourhood of the modern Oczakow. In fact, there were several cities of this, or of a nearly similar name; one of which (also called *Odis-sus* and *Odesopolis*) was situated on the spot where Varna now stands. The site of the present Odessa would, in fact, appear to be the spot which was anciently known as the *Portus Istricorum*. Whatever may have been the name, however, or whatever the history, of the port where Odessa now stands, its great advantages as a station for shipping were lost sight of for many ages, until the Turks, early in the last century, built a fort here, with the name of Khodja-bey, under the protection of which their ships carried on a petty trade in tallow and hides. When this fort fell into the hands of the Russians, in 1789, its conqueror, Rear-admiral de Ribas, by birth an Italian, recalling the days when the galleys of Genoa and other ports of his native country covered this remote sea with their gilded prows, directed the attention of his imperial mistress to the many capabilities which it possessed for becoming a mercantile harbour of the first rank. In consequence of this representation, Catherine, in the year 1793, empowered him to found a city near the fortress; and, going yet farther back in history,—to times when Athens and Egina, as they now again do, drew their richest supplies from the northern shores of the Euxine,—she gave it the classic name of the city already referred to.

Advantageous, however, as the site is for a shipping station, the stranger is surprised at the boldness of the idea of founding a city on a spot so bleak and barren. The surrounding country looks like a burnt desert. So parching is the breeze of summer, and so cold that of winter, that not a tree will grow. The hard clay is also unfriendly to the root.

But, to show that the anticipations of its sagacious founder have been completely realized, it may be stated that in 1799 Odessa already contained 4147 inhabitants. Three years after this the Emperor Alexander appointed the Duc de Richelieu governor of the city; and so many were the advantages conferred on it during his rule, that this enlightened foreigner may be considered its greatest benefactor. The city, which he found with 8000 inhabitants, contained, only twenty years later, not fewer than 36,000 souls. In the course of 1823, Count Woronzow, already named in these pages, took up his residence here, as governor of Little Russia; and under his paternal administration (now, as was above stated, at an end) the city has added 9000 to its population in the course of thirteen years. Of its 45,000 inhabitants, which was stated to us to be the amount of the population at the time of our visit, 4000 are foreigners, or at least not naturalized Russians. Not less than 8000 Poles now visit the city every year—the better classes for the sake of sea-bathing, and the poorer to seek employment about the harbour.

Nor has Odessa yet reached its full splendour. No one who has considered the many advantages which it enjoys, as the key to a vast district of country, whose

wants are daily increasing, and whose inexhaustible resources are only now beginning to be appreciated, can doubt that it is destined to become one of the greatest commercial cities in the world. The nature and extent of its trade at the present moment will best appear from the following brief account of its general exports and imports.

EXPORTS.

Articles.	Places they are sent to.
WHEAT , from the provinces of Kherson, Podolia, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Ekaterinoslaf.	Constantinople, Syra (the principal port of Greece). Zante, Leghorn, Genoa, Marseilles, London, and New York.
RYE , from the same provinces.	Ports of the Adriatic.
BARLEY	Smyrna, and other Turkish ports.
WHEAT-FLOUR (only about 8000 sacks annually).	Chiefly to Greece.
TALLOW , from the manufactories near Odessa, and those of Nicolaeff, Kischenew, &c.	The greater part to England, and some to Constantinople and Trieste.
WOOL (now a very valuable article in the trade of this port), from the Crimea and Bessarabia.	Coarser kinds to Trieste, Leghorn, and Marseilles; the finer to Moscow.
ROPES, SALT BUTTER, CAVIAR, and TALLOW-CANDLES.	Constantinople, Smyrna, and other Turkish ports.
WAX , from the Ukraine	Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles.
LINSEED and OIL-CAKE	Holland and England.
IRON , in very small quantities .	The ports of Italy.

Grain, as is well known, constitutes the most important branch of the commerce of Odessa; the quantity exported every year being seldom less than one million of tchetverts (each of which, as already stated, is equal to .68 of an English bushel.) From all we could learn on the spot, the merchants seem to be of opinion that

this branch of the trade with England may be considerably increased—of course at the expense of the British farmer. The wool is also fast rising into importance; the merino sheep, and some excellent crosses of that race, being now very abundant in the Crimea, and in all parts of Bessarabia. But our home-growers have little to fear from competition with this wool, most of it being required for the manufactories of Moscow, which are now very active. The waggons which go to Moscow from this place generally require from thirty to thirty-five days for the journey, and, when the roads are very bad, as many as forty. The cost of carriage varies from one and a half to three roubles (2s. 6d.) per pood (thirty-six English or forty Russian pounds).

Nothing that we heard among the merchants surprised us more than the fact that they now export grain all the way to America! It had never been done until the year before our visit; but some cargoes of rye then sent to New York had paid so well, that it was intended to make shipments of grain on a much larger scale.

The exportation of oak-staves for making barrels, &c., chiefly to England, would appear to be another new branch of trade. They are brought down the Dnieper from the forests of the interior.

Some traffic also now takes place also in the wines of the Crimea, which are fast rising into repute, though we cannot agree with the Russians in thinking that they will supplant the wines of Oporto. The annual sales of the Crimea, including those of the *Kokour* wine, now generally average about twelve million bottles.

It is chiefly in summer that grain, and all other

articles of export, are conveyed here from the interior. Small quantities are occasionally brought in winter also ; but the journey at that season is so precarious that few merchants like to trust to it. The population of Odessa is at times increased to an enormous degree, by the influx of boors employed in transporting grain. The whole of it is conveyed in cars drawn by bullocks, each car being loaded on an average with five tchetverts ; consequently, before one million of tchetverts can be brought in, not less than two hundred thousand cars are required. Allowing a man to every five cars, we shall find that Odessa must at such times contain at least fifty thousand strangers, of this description alone. They do not, of course, all come, more than they all leave, together ; but this influx has been known to take place in the course of a few weeks. The maintenance of the bullocks is also a serious affair ; for, there being two to every car, the whole number employed is not less than four hundred thousand.

The total value of the exports for four different years was as follows:—in 1830, 27,031,000 roubles, besides exports to Georgia, valued at 121,683 roubles ; in 1831, 20,063,953 roubles ; in 1832, 29,088,259 roubles ; and in 1835, 27,000,000 roubles. Without giving the amount of duty paid in each of those years, it may suffice to state that the duties paid in the first of them amounted to 1,217,824 roubles, meaning always the *paper* rouble (equal to 10*d.* English), as everywhere throughout these pages.

The consumption of foreign articles throughout the vast provinces of Southern Russia is so limited, that the

imports of Odessa scarcely reach in value half of what might be expected. There can be no doubt, however, that the heavy duties on all foreign goods operate greatly against this balance side of the trade. The following table shows the principal imports.

IMPORTS.

Articles.	From.
Colonial products, refined sugar, pewter, tin, Madeira and port wines, coals (chiefly for steamers), woollen and cotton goods.	ENGLAND.
Wines in casks and bottles, Dutch cheese, colonial products, corks, fine oils, aromatic vinegar, sweet almonds, woollen, cotton, and silk goods.	FRANCE.
Colonial products, olive-oil, Parmesan cheese, corks, and lead.	SARDINIA.
Colonial products, olive-oil, alabaster, straw hats, &c.	TUSCANY.
Colonial products, Spanish lead, fresh oranges and lemons.	MALTA.
Olive-oil, citric acid, orange and lemon peel, sweet and bitter almonds, manna, sulphur, Marsala wine, fresh oranges and lemons.	THE TWO SICILIES.
The red wine of the islands, Cyprus wine, cotton and silks, common olive-oil, dried fruits (including dates, figs, &c.), tobacco, coral, saffron, gum, incense, bath-sponges, &c.	CONSTANTINOPLE, BROUS-SA, SMYRNA, SYRA, and other ports of the ARCHIEPELAGO.

The united value of all these imports, including those consumed in the city and those sent to the interior, in the years above mentioned, was as follows:—In 1830 goods were imported by sea to the value of 33,450,114 roubles, besides imports overland by Brody to the value of 1,872,675 roubles. The duties on imports for this

year amounted to 1,872,675 roubles. In 1832 the imports were valued at 21,169,121 roubles; in 1833 at 26,871,140 roubles; and those of 1835 at 29,000,000 roubles.

In this summary of the trade of Odessa we must not omit to state that the town contains nearly sixty manufactories of coarse cloth, &c.; but these have little influence on the general trade of the place.

The general state of the shipping of this port may be inferred from the fact, that, of the 855 vessels which entered in 1830, as many as 555 were empty; while, of the 931 which left, only 14 were without cargoes.

The greater part of the carrying trade is performed in Austrian ships, of which 228 entered the port in 1830 (54 laden, and 174 empty). Sardinia comes next in the list, having sent in the same year 222 ships (62 laden, and 160 empty). Of Russian ships, 160 entered (91 laden, and 69 empty); while of English vessels there were in all 144 (55 laden, and 89 empty). The number of French ships is surprisingly small, only 8 having entered in the year now named. Greece sent 53 ships; Turkey, 11; Sweden, 8; Spain, 3; the Netherlands, 2; and the United States, 2. Of the small coasting barks of the country (*lodki*, &c.), there are at least 800 enter and leave the port every year.

Odessa has never been used as a military harbour; none but trading vessels ever visit it. There can be little doubt that the shipping of this place would be greatly increased were it possible to improve the harbour. "On the whole, however, the roads are spacious and good; they are opened from the north-east to the south-

east; at the bottom there is mud and grass. Ships anchor generally to the north-east of the mole, which is 288 fathoms long, in a depth of between thirty-five and fifty feet. The quarantine harbour, protected by this mole, stretching out irregularly to the north-east, will not hold more than 300 ships. The present emperor has for some time had the intention of increasing the size of the harbour by lengthening the mole; but it is to be feared that such an alteration would cause a great quantity of sand to be drifted into the quarantine station. At its present mouth there is not more than from twenty to twenty-two feet of water; and near the shore not more than four and a-half to six and a-half feet: there is a machine for clearing away the mud. The harbour into which ships are admitted after the expiration of their quarantine is small and shallow; at its mouth there is not more than ten or twelve feet of water, and it is little used except by the coasting barks. It is protected by a mole 206 fathoms long, called the Inner Mole.”*

The winter, though generally severe, is sometimes very open. The trade is seldom interrupted by the frosts for more than six weeks or two months; and even when this takes place the ice is not of great strength. The thermometer rarely falls below 18° of Fahrenheit. In summer, on the other hand, the heats are very intense, the thermometer often ranging as high as 95°. The greatest annoyance during the warm weather proceeds from the clouds of dust, or rather of a subtle impalpable powder, which are raised by the slightest breath of wind, and

* “Russian Ports in the Black Sea,” p. 15; a valuable little pamphlet, published by Schloss. London, 1837.

even by the wheels of a carriage passing along the street. We found it at times exceedingly disagreeable; and it is considered so injurious to tender lungs, that the wealthy people having young families always remove them to the country in the dry season. Before this practice was introduced, which was not till good physicians settled here, the town was considered very unhealthy. Now, however, that the doctors insist on this partial emigration, and have prevailed on people to build houses and procure clothing suitable to the rough winter,—which they were very long in doing,—Odessa is considered sufficiently healthy.

To complete the statistics of Odessa it must be added, that it contains a very important academic institution, not unknown to the learned world as the Richelieu Lyceum. Though it does not enjoy the nominal rank of a university, this establishment exercises most of the functions of one; for it contains professors (chiefly Germans) of Greek, natural and general history, and all the higher departments of science. It is also provided with a botanic garden, astronomical instruments, &c., and superintends the educational interests of the extensive governments of Kherson, Ekaterinoslaf, and Taurida. It is generally attended by 450 students. The *Journal d'Odessa* does not proceed from this learned body; it is a mere commercial publication, but now and then gives some articles of news connected with the army of the Caucasus.

The details which have now been offered will make the reader in some degree acquainted with the city in which we closed our Scythian campaign. Of the thou-

sand cities of Russia, Odessa is decidedly the least Russian ; for, as in all the other sea-ports of the empire, the best branches of the trade are in the hands of foreigners. The only portion of it conducted by Russians is the petty traffic along the coast, or on the rivers.

One part of the city is, indeed, sufficiently Russian, both in filth and misery ; but it lies so far out of the stranger's way that he seldom visits it. The quarter best known to him looks very like some of the gayer cities of Italy. Most of the streets in this part, as we have said, are paved with broad slabs, like those of Naples ; and the beautiful terrace commands a sea-view which almost reminds one of that of Genoa. The climate, too, is Italian. The bright sky and the balmy air resemble those of the cities now named. There is also an Italian Opera, as well-appointed and patronised as most in Italy ; and, lastly, the soft accents of the *lingua Toscana* itself are heard from so many lips, that the overjoyed stranger, after supping full of Russian horrors, almost persuades himself that he has reached the gayest and sunniest portion of Europe.

Of the Italians here, many are engaged in the higher departments of trade. Some are jewellers ; some book-sellers, or merchants on a small scale ; and not a few are employed at the Opera.

This being the only place to which the Poles are allowed to resort out of their own country, the number of them here, as already stated, is very great. In summer, the wealthiest families now remaining all meet at Odessa during the bathing season ; and, notwithstanding the jealous and severe surveillance of the emperor's

police, they manage to lead a very gay life. Not a step can they take, however, nor a word can they utter, that is not watched.

Many Polish Jews live here as pedlars, *valets de place*, and servants. Lemberg, and the adjacent provinces, also contribute some of the most melancholy specimens of Jewish rapacity and meanness that are to be found in the world.

German mechanics of every description are very numerous; and some of the first bankers and merchants belong to that nation.

Greeks flock hither in great numbers. One of them, Mr. Ralli, whose brothers are also well known in the commercial world, is one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the place.

Of the many Frenchmen resident in Odessa, some carry on trade on a very extensive scale, some are employed under government, and others are hotel-keepers, &c.

The least numerous, but not the least important, part of the foreign population is composed of English merchants, whose rights and interests are ably defended by Mr. Yeames, British consul-general, well known as one of the most talented men in our consular service. It is superfluous to state that at a place like Odessa, which from its position is of great importance, in a political as well as in a commercial point of view, it is absolutely necessary that we should be represented by a man of integrity and vigilance. As a central point in relation with many important countries, and for collecting information, it is of greater moment to England than some royal

courts, where our envoys cost us many thousands annually ; and from all we heard on the spot, our interests in this part of Russia could not be in better hands than they are at present.

Several Englishmen for whom we had introductions were absent at the time of our visit,—some on sporting excursions, and some on more grave pursuits ; but those of our countrymen whom we found in the city, especially Mr. Moberley, and Messrs. Philpotts and Damian, of the house of Carruthers and Co., showed us so much attention, that we were not allowed to feel the absence of those on whose kindness we had greater claims.

The villas to which the wealthy residents generally retire every evening during the summer and autumn, are called *hutors*—a name which is employed also at Warsaw to denote a suburban retreat. Nothing can be more delightful than these retreats, situated, as they generally are, among shrubs and flowers, on the sea-shore, at the foot of a magnificent range of cliffs, running south-east from the city. The evening at these places is spent by some of our countrymen in fishing-excursions, on one of the most beautiful seas in the world. Every walk round these mansions is overhung with fine specimens of the acacia, which is almost the only tree that can be brought to thrive in the country. It is not often, however, that the *hutors* of Odessa are surrounded by verdure so rich as that which we found near them ; for in some years the country is invaded by immense flights of locusts, which leave not a single green leaf either on herb or tree. This insect is the greatest scourge that the country is exposed to. Every person at the time of our visit was frightened with a belief that the following year the locusts would

destroy the crops of every description; for they had recently been in this district as well as in Bessarabia, and though they had vanished without doing much injury at the time, yet they had been long enough in the country to prepare a future year of misery to the poor peasant: for it appears that it is not always by actual invasion in flights that the greatest harm is done, but also by the larvæ bred from eggs deposited in the ground during a previous visit. The severe cold of winter, which might be expected to destroy these noxious deposits, has no effect on them: the only thing that destroys the egg is a smart frost in August.

When the locusts come in their dense array from the south, nothing but noise has any effect in preventing them from settling in any particular spot. An English lady gave us a very amusing account of the musical entertainments held in her house and gardens a few years before, at the time these swarms were in progress. Her lord and husband was, as of right, leader of the harmonious band, and for this purpose armed himself with a huge bell, which he swung with amazing effect. Next to him came the gardener with his watering-pan; after this zealous functionary came the footmen with the fire-shovels; then the housemaids with their pots and kettles; and, finally, the children of the family, equipped with tea-boards and toasting-forks, which, assuredly, played no secondary part in this noisy concert. Ever as the hour of danger returned the performers were at their posts, walking up and down, to their own great amusement and delectation, but greatly to the dismay of the locusts, as well as of the families in the adjoining *hutors*, who thought that their English neighbours had all gone

mad. So effectual, however, were these performances, that while not a leaf was left in any other part of the land, this well-watched garden continued as verdant as ever.

In fact, the visit of the locust is here a most dreadful calamity. Their flights, at times, literally darken the sun. In some years everything is eaten up; not a blade is left for man or beast. Instances are known of people dying of actual hunger, not far from this place, during the famine occasioned by their devastations. The country having been quite free of them for two seasons previous to 1836, the people had begun to flourish a little; but their hopes were sadly cast down during our visit by the prospect of new devastations. We saw many locusts among the grass, but not in such numbers as in the instances above alluded to. Snakes are not uncommon; they often penetrate to the most private rooms in the summer villas, but not being venomous they are little dreaded. A species of scolopendra (centipede), ugly and said to be venomous, is also frequent.

Undisturbed, however, by fears of locusts, or of any other evil to which the land may be subject, we enjoyed ourselves at Odessa as if it were the most favoured spot on earth. The week which we spent there was in fact one of the most agreeable of the many weeks we have spent in strange lands. The genial climate and the refreshing water-melons would of themselves make Odessa an elysium, after the chills and the turnips of Muscovy. Though September was now far advanced we were able to bathe in the sea every day. In short—boating parties on the beautiful bay, good dinners with our friends, twilight walks on the promenade, where all the best society of

the place is to be met, and plenty of music at night—all these helped to make time pass very agreeably, without reckoning certain oriental luxuries, such as the Turkish bath—which, though the building is not very elegant, may here be enjoyed in as great perfection as at Constantinople itself—and the seductive chibouque, which he who once touches it seldom lays aside, so long as tobacco can be procured, or cherry-tubes will hold together.

The gentlemen of Odessa rival the Turks themselves in their passion for smoking: nor are they here the only lovers of the narcotic weed, for ladies of rank also use it. Several of the most distinguished Russian countesses frequently smoke small cigars; and among the Polish ladies in Odessa the practice is still more common.

The nobles of this city lead a very gay, and, we fear, a very dissolute life. Sad stories are current regarding their private habits, but we forbear to soil our page with them. Their great place of resort is the Opera, without which, in fact, they could scarcely live. So fond are the Polish visitors of this amusement, that the boxes are generally all engaged by them two or three years in advance. Two rival *prima donnas* divided the favour of the public during the time of our stay. The feud ran very high—the Countess W—— leading the one party, and Countess somebody the other; and the worst of it was that strangers were expected to enter quite as keenly into the war as if they had known La Signora Patera and her rival for many a day, while, in fact, they had never before enjoyed the felicity of hearing their illustrious names. Besides costing the nobles themselves a great deal every year, this theatre is a very serious charge on government; as may be inferred from the fact that a tenor had been

engaged for it at an annual salary of 15,000 roubles, with a free house and appointments worth about 5,000 more, in all about 800*l.* ; which, it will be allowed, is no bad salary for a singer in a town not much larger than Chester, and in a country where a lieutenant of many years' standing is thought sufficiently paid with twenty-eight pounds a-year.

Jews, as everywhere else in the south of Russia, are here at once useful and annoying to the traveller. They make themselves useful by acting as money-changers, valets, guides, or venders of such articles of native manufacture as strangers are most likely to buy. In short, there is nothing too high nor too low for them. From cashing a bill to carrying dirty linen to the washerwoman, all comes alike to them.

It is this grasping eagerness to obtain employment which makes them also, as has just been stated, a nuisance to the stranger. Morning, noon, and night they are pestering him. If he fly from their attack in the street they pursue him to the house. In vain even does he seek to hide himself in his apartment—they hunt him out as staunchly as bloodhounds. If he drives them away, and after an hour or two's concealment sallies forth, in the belief that *now* surely the coast is clear, he will find them still watching his exit, as coolly as if they were the best of friends. When they cannot prevail on him to buy anything of theirs, they occasionally take a fancy for something of his ; and the trouble which they now give in trying to make him *sell* is just as great as that which they had before given in trying to make him *buy*. We were highly amused with the passion which one of them

took for an article not at all considered likely to tempt a bargain-maker. This was nothing else than an old beaver cap, which had travelled so long, and rendered such faithful service, that it possessed few charms for an ordinary eye. What might be its peculiar recommendations to an Israelite we could never divine; but great they must have been, for from the moment he caught a glimpse of it he was like one out of his senses. At earliest dawn, and latest light, he lay in wait with proposals about the darling object of his desire, offering goods or services in exchange for it, and at last money, when nothing else would prevail—more, too, than it had cost many years before. Conquered by all this pertinacity the owner finally parted with it in exchange for an Astracan cap of little value, and was rewarded for the sacrifice by hearing, what few have heard, a Jew avow that he was contented.

Fortunately there is nothing so old or so hopeless that a Jew will not find some use for it. Even our shattered carriage had charms for the brethren of Odessa. We were almost sorry to part from the rumbling ark which had furnished us with bed and board for so many weeks, but were reconciled to the separation by the thought that it was passing into hands which would soon make it look as smart as ever. They gave us something more than a third of what it had cost us, including repairs, and probably sold it in a few weeks for a much higher sum than it was worth in its best days.

Heavy as our carriage was, we had been able to accomplish on an average about ninety miles each day that we travelled. We halted only in the principal towns, and in these seldom more than a day or a night. On the

whole, all the places along our route are so uninteresting to the general traveller, that he will seldom feel inclined to tarry in them longer than we did. Our journey of 1235 miles from Nishnei-Novgorod, which occupied us fourteen days, would have been performed by foreign mercantile travellers, by Russians of every class, by couriers, and, though it be very disrespectful to name him last, by the Emperor himself, in half the time. The shortest stage in any part of our journey was one of twelve versts (nine miles) in leaving Vladimir; and the longest was one of thirty-one and a half versts (twenty-one miles), which occurred soon after. The average length of Russian stages is eighteen miles.

In our *marche-route* the distance from Moscow to Odessa by Nishnei is marked as 2,290 versts; but as several of the stages are in reality longer than is indicated in the list, we may add at least a dozen of versts more for all differences, making 2,302 versts; to which, if we add the 698 versts from St. Petersburg to Moscow, it will be found that the whole length of our wanderings in Russia was three thousand versts, or exactly TWO THOUSAND MILES.

At Odessa we were sixty miles farther from St. Petersburg than London is from that capital. In fact, the intercourse between Odessa and the Russian metropolis is not so great as that between London and St. Petersburg: in proof of which we may mention that Mr. Yeames told us that a parcel for Lord Durham had been lying beside him a month or two, for want of an opportunity by which it might be forwarded. In London he would have opportunities every week. The merchants of Odessa, when returning from their visits in England, prefer the route

by Hamburg, Berlin, Breslau, Cracow, and Brody, to that by Vienna and Gallatz. The time required in going by Hamburg is about twenty-one days; and many perform the journey alone, without knowing a word of German, Polish, or French.

Our faithful Lebedeff must not be forgotten in these concluding reminiscences. We found him the very prince of couriers. Bating a certain incorrigible propensity to keep his hand in practice on the shoulders of the postillions, he is one of the best-hearted fellows in the world;—which, with all his other good qualities, having been duly attested in a letter which we gave him to the head of the post-office at Moscow, he returned to that city the happiest of men—loaded with ribbons for his sweetheart, and more grateful for the few pounds he had gained by his trip than an Italian courier would have been after easing a *milord* of as many hundreds.

Before quitting this subject, we may state a few particulars on the general expenses of travelling in Russia. These vary so much, according to the habits of the individual, that no fixed rule can be laid down regarding them; but it may be stated in a few words, that, on the whole, though a belief in the contrary is very general, Russia is not much more expensive to travel in than the other countries of the Continent. For instance, two friends travelling as we did—that is, living at the best hotels, and denying themselves no comfort that the country affords, but avoiding all unnecessary outlay—will not spend more than from 26*l.* to 30*l.* a month each. This includes the purchase of a carriage, say 40*l.* or 50*l.*, to be sold at the end of the journey, and the wages of a native servant *en route*. In other terms, two friends

visiting Russia together, and spending three months between the capital and the provinces, would expend from 150*l.* to 180*l.*; and we suspect that, on comparing notes, few will find that they have been able to live for three months, and travel 2,000 miles, for less than this, even in the more frequented countries of the Continent.

Those who are inclined may travel even cheaper than this: for example, they have only to buy a *telega* in place of a carriage, and they at once strike off 25*l.* from the three months' expenses above quoted. But there is no saving in travelling four together, as we did, even on the *padoroshna*. A party of four certainly needs but one *padoroshna*, while two parties require two; but as the tax paid for this document varies according to the number of horses required, and as a large carriage which holds four people needs double the number of horses of a small one holding two, the single *padoroshna* costs precisely the same as a pair would do for two separate parties. The great advantage of four travelling together is the sense of security which numbers give, and which one is not sorry to enjoy in such a dreary country. There is also a still greater advantage derived from an increase of numbers—and it is one which we appreciated very highly in our own case—namely, the additional chance of obtaining a greater variety of information about the country. In such a party, one has a taste for one department of knowledge—one for another; and the result is that each aids his neighbour, by turning his attention to some new topic, which might otherwise have escaped him.

While in Odessa, the traveller will find his expenses extremely moderate; it is, in fact, one of the cheapest towns on the Continent: its markets are well supplied

with beef and mutton of excellent quality, and the *gourmet* may procure in them an article little known in other parts of Europe—namely, the tail of the broad-tailed sheep of Arabia, which has now spread all over the Steppes of Russia, as well as through Egypt and other parts of North Africa. The flesh of the animal is not good, and its wool, or rather coarse hair, is totally useless to the manufacturer. The tail, however, is reckoned a great delicacy; and though we never heard that it here becomes so large, that the Russians, like the humane nations which other travellers have visited, must provide the animal with a wheel-barrow to drag it about upon, yet there are parts even of Russia where this caudal enormity sometimes attains the goodly weight of ten pounds.

All kinds of poultry are cheap in Odessa. A large bustard may be bought for a rouble; a great variety of game, and the most delicate kinds of fish, are sold equally cheap. Fruits of delicious quality are very abundant. Odessa being, as we said, a free port, foreign wines may be bought on very reasonable terms. The same remark, however, will not apply to the purchase of fancy articles, apparel, &c., all of which sell very dear. This was accounted for by the mode of transport employed in bringing such commodities to Odessa; for it seems they do not come by sea direct from France or England, but are all purchased at the fairs of Leipsic, from whence there is a long and expensive land-carriage. Residents also complain that house-rent is very high. Fuel is another dear article; it is sold as high as eighty-four roubles (3*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*) per cubic fathom. Water is also very expensive; for none is to be got within the town. The nearest place where it can be procured is a few versts

off; so that families must keep horses for the particular purpose of bringing this indispensable article, or pay very high for it to the carriers. No attempt has been made to bring it in by laying pipes, and all attempts to procure water by digging in the city have been unsuccessful. Upwards of 80,000 roubles have been expended on Artesian wells, some of which were sunk to the depth of 600 feet; but though streams of water were crossed several times in the progress downward, none has ever been met with that would rise.

By the passing traveller, however, these expenses are scarcely felt. He may hire an excellent suite of rooms at the *Richelieu* for ten roubles (8s. 4d.) a-day. The charge for bed-rooms varies from six to eight roubles; and a person remaining a few weeks will not pay more than three roubles (2s. 6d.) each day. The expense of apartments entirely depends on the choice of the traveller himself; for here, and in other parts of the continent, it is not as at many English inns, where all comers pay the same: in foreign hotels every one makes a bargain for himself, and selects the accommodation suited to his means. Odessa contains hotels of every variety. The one on the terrace, commanding a beautiful view, and provided with an irreproachable *cuisine*, is an excellent house; and some others in the adjoining street are equally good.

But none of these houses can compare with the *Richelieu*, which has already been so much praised by travellers that little can be added to its fame. It is a large and stately structure, with a lofty gateway, and ample, well-kept stairs; and is altogether more like the newer town mansions of the French nobility than a public

hotel. *Madame*, though Russian, is the comeliest of landladies; and *Monsieur*, being French, is the very prince of cooks. Oh! pleasant is he to behold, in his white nightcap and white apron, preparing to slaughter some innocent, but well-fed bustard, whose good qualities render it totally unfit for longer stay in this gormandising world. Pleasant also is he to behold, with glowing face and naked arm, toiling among his saucepans, and watching the progress of his interesting concoctions, with eye as eager as ever was that of alchemist of old when watching the bubbling of his crucibles. But, more pleasant still is he to behold when, the nightcap thrown aside, and, the evening being now come, the snowy apron exchanged for a yet more snowy waistcoat, he presents himself with a bottle of choice Burgundy in his hand, to hear the laudatory sentence which you have to pass on the works of his hand. Pleasant also is it to tread his well-polished floors, shining like the best oaken *parquets* of his own France. Pleasant is it to sit in his breakfast-room, with its neatest of tables, and gayest of mirrors. But most pleasant of all the pleasurable we have enumerated is the pleasure of sleeping in his beds of softest and purest down. In fact, after duly meditating on all these pleasant things, we came to the irresistible conclusion, that the cunning emperor has placed Monsieur Alphonse and his spouse here for no other purpose than to make travellers ashamed of all the grumbling they have been guilty of while traversing this comfortless empire—comfortless every inch of it, until they reach this, the last of its cities.

These notes on Odessa cannot be closed without some

allusion to certain of its sights and scenes, with which strangers in general are but too familiar, and which would merit to be spoken of in a very different tone from that hitherto employed in this chapter. In fact, every town in Russia contains scenes of the most disgusting profligacy; and they are now referred to for the double purpose of satisfying those who, knowing Russia, would be surprised to find no notice taken of them in these pages, and at the same time of warning our travelling countrymen that both in Russia, and in other parts of the continent, they ought to shun those haunts, if not out of respect for themselves, at least out of respect for their country, the character of which has too often suffered by the conduct of those who leave our shores. Even individuals who at home would shudder at the idea of coming in contact with vice, often throw aside their scruples when abroad, on the plea that it is a traveller's duty to see everything. The plea, however, is inadmissible: it is the traveller's duty to see all that is distinctive, peculiar, or new, in the countries he visits; but, as we have never heard that vice and immorality are very rare in any part of the world, he cannot with reason plead the attraction of novelty, as an excuse for wilfully seeking such sights. The traveller's object ought to be to find out what is good in foreign countries, rather than what is bad. Instead of the foul and degrading recollections of the nature now alluded to, he ought to try to carry away some happy and improving remembrance, to bind him in after-days with each land he has visited.

If we may believe the testimony of those who have been long acquainted with Russia, it abounds more with

scenes of vice than any country of Europe. But it is the stranger's own fault if he meets with such. If he do not *seek* for them, they will not thrust themselves in his way. In fact, the man who has a proper self-respect may travel, not through Russia only, but through all parts of the continent, without having his better feelings wounded more than if he were under his own roof. All depends on the taste and habits of the individual. But, surely, he who travels for the sake of becoming acquainted with the scenes which we now censure sadly perverts the noble ends of travel. Properly employed, foreign travel is the most improving, as well as the most delightful, of all occupations. None yields greater variety of instruction and amusement at the moment ; and none furnishes such ample store of pleasant remembrances for after-life. In the present day it is also to be more prized, from the fact that now it is *the only distinction which the man of means and education can boast of above the mechanic*. The journeyman with the awl or plane in his hand, is now often as well acquainted with the more valuable branches of knowledge as the scholar who can boast of his degree, or the peer who can wear a star on his breast. Books, and other aids to the acquisition of knowledge, once at the command of the rich alone, are at length within the reach of the poor ; and that their new possessors can turn them to as good account, it is now too late to deny.

In fact, a system of equality, much more efficient than any that the politician ever dreamt of, has established itself so widely, that the two extremes of society now meet more nearly than our ancestors could have ventured to anticipate. But there is one distinction still exists be-

tween them, and that distinction we have already named. The power of indulging in foreign travel, even with all the facilities for visiting other lands afforded by modern improvements, remains an aristocratic privilege. The artisan cannot move from the spot where his bread is won : the man of rank can wander where he lists. Is it then wise of the traveller to pervert this, his only, and his truly enviable, privilege, in the way in which, it is to be acknowledged with regret, too many do pervert it? Surely the lot of the humblest who toils for his daily bread, so long as he toils in virtue and contentment, is more honourable than that of him who thus abuses his advantages.

If we had any hope that the counsel would be listened to—the counsel of one who has had opportunity of witnessing the fatal effects of the course he is now denouncing—we should say to the thousands of our youthful countrymen now traversing the continent from side to side : Do not turn into a curse opportunities which, rightly employed, ought to be your greatest blessing. The countries you are visiting abound with sights of the most amusing character, which may be enjoyed without summoning a blush to the cheek at the moment, or laying up a sting for after-life. Seek these without restraint. Frequent the new and ever-varying crowds ; mingle freely with the poor, see them in their workshops, and see them in their recreations. In all this there is nothing to be censured ; the more such scenes are frequented the better, since it is from them alone that the true character of a people is to be learnt. Spend your time in this way, and you come home an improved and a useful man, with stores of

knowledge that will render you an ornament to your station and a benefactor to your country.

But if, on the contrary, your years abroad are spent in the haunts of vice and shame, instead of returning with increased capability for entering on the noble duties to which your station calls you, you will come home with minds enervated and high faculties rendered useless; accomplished in every foreign vice, but with not one English virtue left; condemned by that healthful moral feeling which, happily, still pervades the higher ranks of your countrymen; in your own class shunned by those who would once have courted you, and in all classes the object of a scorn from which neither titles nor fortune will shield you;—in one word, you will again tread the shores of England, alas! not with the emotions of pleasure which every good man feels as he once more sets foot on his native soil, but with the humiliating conviction that you come back unfit for any useful purpose, except it be to serve as a beacon to warn others from the course which has brought you to shame.

And now we take our leave of Russia. The changing year is on the wing, and in its flight bids us prepare for other lands.

One word, however, ere we part. We leave Russia with higher opinions of it than when we entered. Our brief sojourn in its capital, and hurried excursions through its provinces, have removed some, and at least shaken most, of our prejudices against it. We now see that it is vain any longer to call the Russians “barbarians.” This appellation can with justice be applied only to those who

are not sensible of their barbarism, and have never sought to emerge from it : but so far is this from being the case with the Russians, that they are making every effort to escape from their hitherto low position in the social scale. We do not say that they have yet made great progress in the journey towards refinement ; but it is much to have begun the good course. Our visit, however, has not impressed us with a belief that Russia is destined to rise immediately to that high eminence in civilization which some have predicted ; nor has it excited any fear that she is about to obtain that overwhelming influence in the affairs of Europe, which her emperors have so long and so steadily endeavoured to secure for her. The reasons which constrain us to differ from so many on these subjects, it is not necessary to recapitulate here, as they have been fully given in the foregoing pages.

Before concluding, a brief allusion may be made to another theme of alarm, which has of late become general among some classes in England, *viz.*, that our manufactures are threatened with dangerous rivalry from those of Russia.

We have deferred giving an opinion on this subject until we should have had opportunity of becoming acquainted with the condition of the principal towns of the interior, and have learnt something of the various branches of industry pursued in them ; and now that we are entitled to give an opinion, we have no hesitation in saying that this alarm is as groundless as some others which were discussed in our first volume. Where *are* these boasted manufactures of Russia ? We traversed it from north to south in search of them ; but our search was fruitless. There are, undeniably, many establishments of industry, but they are

on the most limited scale. Those in the large cities are not fit to supply the wants of half the population around them ; and even those in the smaller towns do not suffice for the demands of the neighbourhood. The highest of their cloth manufactories, for instance, produces only coarse stuffs, worn by none but the poorer classes, who have never made use of English goods, and who therefore, let them wear what they may, can never be reckoned among our lost customers.

The only tenure which England has of the Russians, or of other foreign nations, as purchasers of her manufactures, lies in the superiority of the goods she produces. Not one of these nations will buy a single web from us—nor do we see why they should—after the day when they can procure as good and as cheap an article at home. That the Russian manufacturer, however, is not likely to be soon in a condition to drive us even from his own market, far less from that of any other state, the slightest acquaintance with that country will very satisfactorily show. In no part of it did we see many articles of native manufacture that would be worn by any person above the lowest rank. Even the finest of the goods which we saw at Nishnei—the best place that a stranger can visit in order to know what Russian manufacturers can produce—were rude and clumsy. Those which we afterwards saw at Toulâ must be described in the same terms ; and, lastly, all that we have now seen produced by the high-sounding “ manufactories ” of Odessa are, if possible, of still meaner character. In short, all that we saw of the products of Russian looms confirmed us in the belief, that England has no more reason to fear that she will be driven from the market by them, than she has to fear that the cottons

spinners of Manchester, and the cloth-weavers of Huddersfield, are to be ruined by the formidable rivalry of the linsey-wolsey of the thrifty housewives of the Scottish Highlands, and the honest homespun of Cumberland.

Even those Russian articles which look indifferently well at first,—such as hats, boots, and some kinds of cloth,—are rendered useless, as we can tell from experience, by a very short wear. As for the minor articles of the toilet, though an attempt has been made to produce them, they are so poorly executed, that even in Russia itself no one will look at them who can afford English ones. In fact, the best comment on the products of the Russian manufactories is that which is furnished by the Russians themselves. A glance at the dress and ornaments of a party of Russians of the higher classes, is worth a whole volume of declamation on the subject. While in Russia, we often tried to assign each article, worn by the different individuals composing such a party, to its native country; and we always found that scarcely a single article belonged to Russia itself. The ladies displayed nothing but muslins from England, or silks from France: the jewels, the gloves, the trimming, all, from the comb in the fair tresses, to the satin slipper on the pretty foot, were from lands remote. Nor did the dress of the gentlemen shame that of their gayer companions, by being more patriotic. The epaulettes on their shoulders, or the cross on their breasts, might be made in Russia, but assuredly all else, from the *eau de Cologne* of the handkerchief, to the varnish of the shoe, were from a foreign market.

These statements are not made in scorn of Russia; but merely to counteract representations of an opposite

tendency, which have of late been circulated in England. We should indeed regret if it could be for a moment supposed that *any* statement in these pages has been dictated by enmity toward Russia; for we can confidently avow that we have tried to write of the country which we are now leaving with nothing but good feeling, and a strict regard to truth. We have ever spoken with admiration of the good qualities of its people; and, though we have blamed some of the public acts of its emperor, we have neither libelled him as a tyrant, nor concealed our admiration of his private qualities. We may have erred, as the most conscientious err, in the judgments formed of a foreign country; but assuredly the errors into which we may have fallen are not those of intention.

Having left the country with a high respect for the people, and with changed views regarding their government, we may be allowed to give utterance to our fervent wish that, spite of all the symptoms which now appear so ominous to many of the good and the wise, Russia and England may still continue united by a friendship which has hitherto stood firm under many rude assaults, and which is alike honourable and advantageous to the two greatest empires in the world.

THE END.

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